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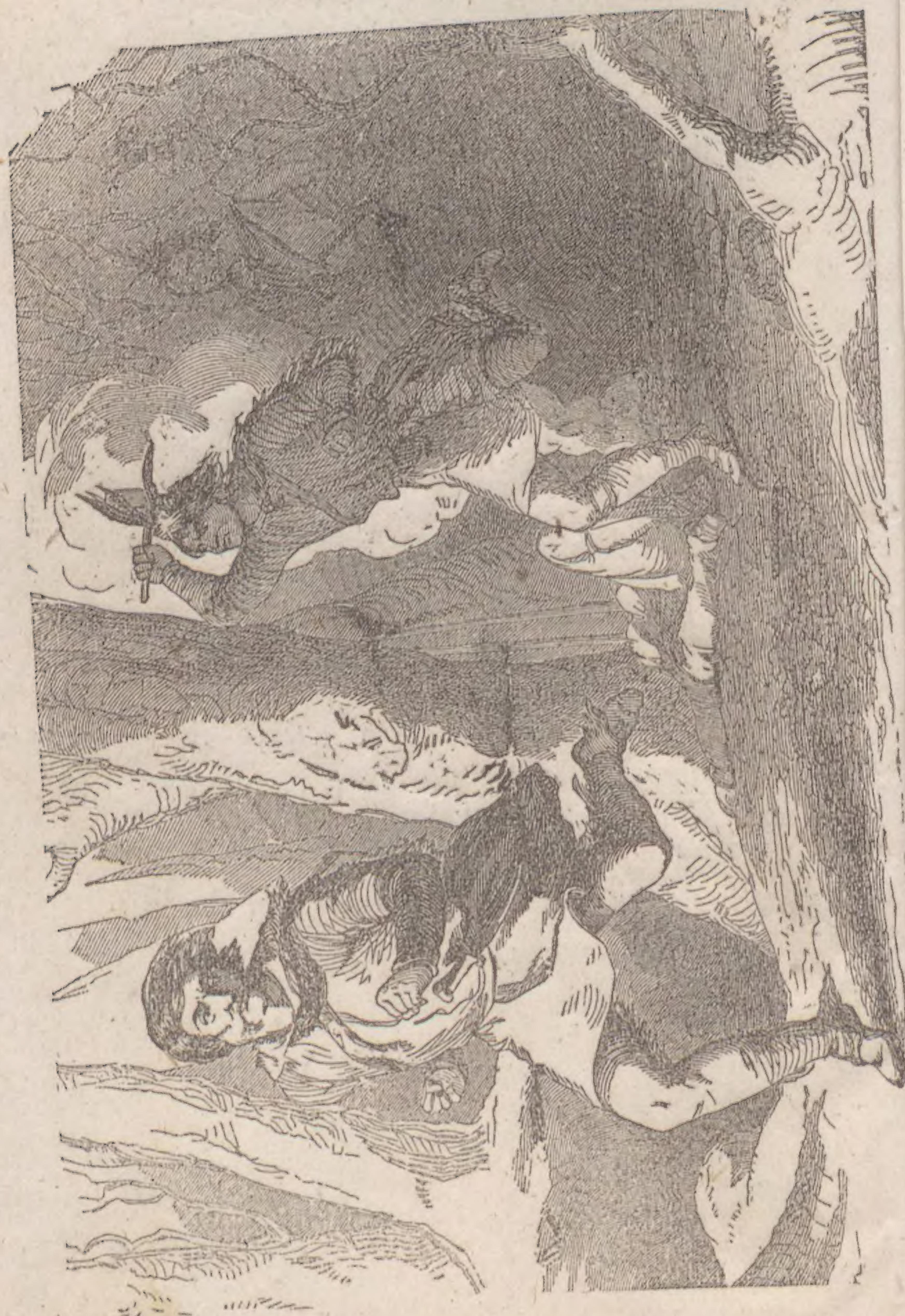
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THE MOHEGAN MAIDEN;

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BY JAMES L. BOWEN,

AUTHOR OF "THE DOOMED HUNTER," "MAID OF WYOMING," ETC.

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THE MOHEGAN MAIDEN.

CHAPTER I.

A CRY.

IT was somewhat past the meridian hour of June third, in the year 1676. The noon-day sun looked down in smiling beauty upon the wide-stretching wilderness of the new world, where yet the feeble hands of the colonies scarcely had made an impression upon its far-reaching forests, or begun to subject to their own uses the richness of its primitive soil.

But, enough had been done to rouse the anger and awaken the jealousy of the red-men, whose claims upon the soil were fast being extinguished, in one manner or another, and who were being pushed gradually to the west, to make way for the growing power of the colonists.

Tribe after tribe had revolted from this state of things, and endeavored to stay the progress, and drive away the white strangers who were robbing them of their lands; but they were alike unsuccessful, and though such attempts were marked by fire and carnage, they invariably recoiled upon the red-man.

At length arose King Philip, (and had his skin been white, no purer patriot would the annals of history boast). Throwing all the energies of his great nature into the struggle, he resolved to do what his people had at various times sought to accomplish, or die in the attempt. The struggle which ensued was exceedingly sanguinary and calamitous. Burned villages, ghastly corpses, and bereaved households were everywhere along the New England border, the Indian suffering equally with the white.

But, the history of this memorable war is too well known to need repetition here. It is only with certain individuals who took part in that struggle that we have to do.

Standing upon a slight elevation of land, in the wildest of the giant primeval forest, not many miles from the settlement of Hadley, and overlooking, at some distance, the broad Connecticut, were two men. In many points the twain were similar, yet in the whole how dissimilar! Both were young, both tall and handsome, bearing traces of immense muscular power, and both were fully armed and equipped.

Thus far the likeness was perfect. But here it ended.

The one upon the right, who was indifferently regarding the operations of his companion, while his eyes frequently swept the forest, or settled to the earth in a sort of melancholy, was a white man, bearing upon his full brow the expression of a noble, manly courage, with the heart to do and dare for those he loved.

This was Archibald Turner, a young man, who, being deprived of his parents at a tender age, in England, had been left to the care of an uncle, who had transported him, years before, to the growing colonies in America. The voyage proving too much for the guardian, whose health was feeble, he died soon after reaching the shores of the Province, leaving young Archibald a stranger in a strange land.

His adventurous disposition leading him to the outposts of civilization, he soon became a proficient in forest strategy, and at the breaking out of hostilities in that section, he spent nearly all of his time in the forest.

His companion was an Indian, possessing all the natural characteristics of his people. His wampum-belt was gayly decorated with fanciful colors, his hair drawn into a grotesque scalp-lock, which was ornamented with a tuft of hawk's feathers. A light blanket, confined at the waist, with leggins and moccasins to protect his nether limbs from the briars and thorns, completed his attire.

The young Indian was a Mohegan, and a peculiar history was his. The tribe had been allies of the English for several years, and suffered many things from King Philip's warriors, because of this allegiance. But they had remained firm, knowing how futile any efforts of theirs would be against the people of whose power they now began to have a more just comprehension.

Hawk's-wing, as his Indian name signified, hunting in the

forest, had encountered a bear, hungry and desperate, it being early spring-time. As he could not flee, the young brave, scarcely more than a stripling, made a bold front, and succeeded in piercing one of the animal's eyes with an arrow. He was also armed with an iron hatchet, and a hunting-knife, which had been obtained from his friends, the English settlers. Drawing these he prepared to defend himself, expecting only death.

At the first encounter his hatchet was dashed away, and he left with but his knife to resist the attacks of the bear. But, resist he did, with such good effect, that he finally dispatched the animal, although fearfully torn and lacerated himself. He endeavored to crawl from the spot, but was too weak from loss of blood, and pain from his wounds to do so. Concluding that his hour had come to die, he sang his death song, and laid himself down to await the unknown change.

But a singular chain of circumstances surrounded the young Indian. A foe to his people, because a foe to the white man, had been watching the deadly struggle, only hoping that the brave Mohegan would be slain. That such was the case he had little doubt, but, wishing to make certain of the fact, he stole up to the prostrate form.

Hawk's-wing saw him coming and knew the fate he must expect, but betrayed no dismay at the presence of his foe. The latter saw the helpless state of the Mohegan, and, after tormenting him a time bent over him to scalp him.

Archibald Turner, in the forest at the time, witnessed all the proceedings of the Narragansett. The brutality which could exult over the sufferings of a person so fearfully wounded as he saw the Mohegan must be, excited his anger, and when the knife was raised to scalp a human being yet alive, he could restrain himself no longer, and fired rather unsteadily from haste.

The Narragansett was wounded, but not severely, and seeing that he was to be foiled in his purpose, he bounded away through the forest like a deer, never looking back till he was far beyond the reach of vision.

Archibald at once went to the assistance of the wounded Indian, whom he found quite composedly awaiting whatever might be in store for him.

Upon seeing that a friend was beside him, his face lighted up with an expression of joy, for no dishonor is greater in the eyes of the Indian than being scalped by a foe.

Archibald at once proceeded to make an examination of the wounds received by the young brave, and though his investigations were far from being scientific, he felt satisfied that with proper care and nursing the Mohegan would recover. Indeed, after the fearful excitement and fatigue of the struggle passed away, Hawk's-wing found himself strong enough to walk a short distance.

It was a mile to the river, where the young man had a canoe. This he resolved to reach.

Carefully reloading his gun, and securing the Mohegan's weapons, he set out, supporting the steps of the savage. Half the distance was passed very comfortably, at short stages, and then the strength of the wounded warrior began to fail. Archibald had bound up his wounds as carefully as possible, and, after allowing him to rest for a time, resumed their painful journey. They were successful at length. Hawk's-wing was placed in the little craft and borne up the river to Hadley. Here, with careful nursing, he so far recovered as soon to be able to return to his tribe.

But his preserver was not forgotten. The young Indian returned often to see his white friend, and finally seemed almost to forsake his people, to cling to the one who had protected him in the hour of need. He even forsook the dark religion of his fathers, and embraced the God of the white man, being called "Christian" at his baptism, a name he now bore very generally among the whites, and frequently among his own people.

Such was the person who stood half bent before a small fire, upon which a fine shad lately drawn from the basin of the Connecticut, was roasting. The fish was just done to perfection, and as the Indian drew it away from the coals, his companion hastened to extinguish the fire, remarking,

"If this smoke should attract the notice of any stray band of Narragansetts, we had better have gone without dinner."

"No bad Injun here," returned Christian, with considerable assurance. "Him big ways off; over the big water."

"May be so," returned Archibald, "but we can not always

tell. I have suspected them of being a good ways off, when they were so near that I almost fell into their hands."

"White man can not tell," rejoined the Indian, his pride of race asserting itself for a moment. "Red-man go like wind, you hear him sound, but no see him."

"I'll not dispute with you, Christian, though I feel that I can track a red-man very well."

"Pale face say 'good,' Injun say 'bad!'" was the sententious rejoinder.

"I admit that I have a good deal to learn yet," was the frank reply; "but do not let our shad spoil. We ought to relish it by this time, for we had a very early breakfast. Bravo for your cooking, Christian! It is excellent!"

The young men seated themselves upon the ground, and did justice to the really luscious fish, literally picking the bones before they desisted. Then they rose, resuming their weapons.

"Which way now, Christian?" demanded the other, as they stood irresolute.

The young brave did not reply, but raised a finger meaningly, while he bent low to listen. But he had no need of intense application, for the next moment, a yell, as of three or four Indians, almost simultaneously giving vent to their angry feelings, reached the ears of both listeners.

"Nar'gansett?" whispered the Mohegan, catching his companion by the sleeve.

"How do you know that?" asked Archibald. "I can not tell tribes apart before I see the warriors."

"White man know white man—Injun know Injun," was the reply. "Hark!"

The cry had come from the direction of the river, which was distant about one-third of a mile from where the two scouts were standing. They could hear movements, faint from the distance, yet unmistakable, of persons dashing through the forest at a rapid rate.

The sounds seemed coming directly toward the spot where they were standing, though no persons were yet visible. Archibald, beginning to feel anxious for his safety, said, "If they are Narragansetts, we had better get out of the way."

Christian did not reply audibly, but stepped back a few

paces, until they were tolerably sheltered by the brow of the hill. Then, indicating with a sweeping motion of his hand, the route they should take, in case there was any necessity for moving from their present position, he remained with an anxious gaze fixed in the direction of the river.

Soon the foremost of the expected party broke into view. Archibald uttered an exclamation, and Christian raised himself a trifle higher, as they realized that it was a fleeing squaw who came first. Close behind her, however, were three Narragansett warriors. The poor female was straining every nerve in the attempt to distance her pursuers, but it was at once apparent to the observers that her efforts were useless; they were already close upon her, and before many rods had been passed over, she was again in their clutches. The captive struggled desperately, and it required two of her captors to urge her forward; but, with the power of numbers they hurried her along, and in a short time were lost to view.

Then it was that Christian turned to Archibald, and while a look of intense earnestness burned upon his swarthy features, he caught his white friend by the shoulder, saying,

"The Mohegan squaw! She must not go; me take her away!"

"Is that a Mohegan maid?" demanded Archibald. "I supposed it was one of their own women. How came they with her?"

"Suppose stole," was the quick reply. "Shining Star good squaw; me know her well; me go to get her away; not ask you to go."

The last sentence was added as he saw Archibald examining the flint to his gun. But the young scout had no idea of allowing his Indian ally to go forth alone to combat three Narragansetts, and so he briefly assured him.

"I shall go with you, Christian; I am ready."

"So be me," responded the Mohegan, dashing a quantity of fresh priming into the pan of his piece.

"How do you know that the squaw was a Mohegan?" asked Archibald, as they passed over the hill, in the direction taken by the others. "I could not have told at that distance one from another. All Indian women look alike to me."

Christian uttered something which sounded like a contemptuous exclamation; then, shaking his head decidedly, he remarked,

“Me not mistaken—me know Shining Star too well. Ah! me good scalp!”

A savage gleam was in his eye, as he uttered these words, which his companion never saw before; it spoke of a spirit untamed and untamable. But all further conversation was prevented, as, at that moment, they came into view of the Indians in advance of them.

Christian at once sought the shelter of such trees as would cover his movements. Archibald needed not his example to adopt similar precautions.

The Narragansetts had paused upon the bank of the river, where a canoe was drawn up, and were binding the arms of their captive. When this was done, with many threatenings they forced her into the boat, and then prepared to follow.

“We had better fire,” suggested Archibald. “We can take each our man from here, and if they get out upon the river they may give us trouble.”

The pursuers were now within tolerable rifle-shot, and, resting their weapons carefully against tree-trunks, they fired, as the Narragansetts were about stepping into the boat. The one at whom Turner aimed fell upon the spot; but the Mohegan seemed to have missed his mark. The other two abandoned their fallen companion, and sprung into the canoe, pushing it from the shore with all speed.

The captive squaw, though evidently startled at what had taken place, realized that friends were at hand and made another effort to escape. But she was forced back as the canoe left the bank, and then the Indians threw themselves upon the bottom, and paddled as best they could without exposing a vital part.

The two pursuers pushed boldly down toward the river-bank, as it was evident that the Narragansetts had only bows and arrows, which were not much to be feared. Turner re-loaded his rifle as he ran, but Christian was too intent upon overhauling the canoe to pause in his swift pursuit. As a consequence, he reached the river-bank a little in advance of Archibald, but found himself incapable of any further effective

effort. He therefore stepped behind a tree and fell to reloading, while the white man poised his rifle.

"I can take that fellow's arm," he remarked, "and I guess I had better do it. 'Twill stop his rowing for a while."

In paddling, one of the savages exposed his arm nearly to the body, and at this the young man aimed carefully. Just as he pulled the trigger, the Narragansett was possessed with a desire to see how matters stood upon the other shore, and raised his head. The deadly messenger did not miss its mark, but passing through the arm at which it was aimed, struck him full in the head. Without a gasp, he fell back in the bottom of the boat, his companion also dropping his oar, which floated alongside the bark.

"Now me swim out," said Christian, dropping his gun and powder-horn. "You watch him."

Archibald picked up the Indian's gun, and leveled it at the boat; but before the Mohegan could throw himself into the water, a new movement caused him to hesitate.

The canoe containing the Narragansett and his captive was seen to rock violently; then it upset, and floated away in that position, while those who had been its occupants disappeared beneath the surface of the water.

"What's the meaning of that?" demanded Turner, lowering his rifle, and turning to his companion.

"That Nar'gansett trick," quickly responded Christian. "He means to drown her! Now me must swim *very* fast or me not find her."

He had only paused upon the brink of the river, and loosening his knife, the Mohegan sprung far into the stream. When he came to the surface, he was well on his way to the scene of the intended murder. Being an expert swimmer, he was soon in the immediate vicinity of the disturbed water, where an Indian's head occasionally appeared above the surface.

Seeing the state of affairs, the remaining Narragansett relaxed his hold upon the half-drowned but still struggling captive, and, with knife in hand, made for the Mohegan. The latter was burning with passion to meet the foe of himself and people, and at once a deadly strife began upon the bosom of the tranquil Connecticut.

By this time, Archibald was in the water, he having seen at once that his presence would be needed, either to assist his companion, or to rescue the captive before it should be too late. He soon reached the place, and found that his dusky ally had gained every advantage, and severely wounded his antagonist, although the fight was not yet decided.

Feeling sure that Christian would prove a match for any single foe, he turned his attention to the one thing they came to find. For some moments he could catch no glimpse of her, but after turning his course down-stream, he saw a dark figure some distance under water, floating with the current.

Diving at once, he succeeded in catching it, and by maintaining a strong hold upon the clothing, he brought it to the surface. What was his disgust at finding it to be the corpse of the savage who had been shot in the boat. Releasing it with a shudder, he turned his attention in other directions.

He speedily discovered another floating form, some distance further out in the river, and feeling sure that there could be no mistake this time, he swam out, and grasped it. It proved to be the captive squaw. Without waiting to ascertain more, he carefully raised the head above water, and started for the shore.

He saw that the Narragansett had disappeared from sight, and soon after, upon looking round, he saw Christian swimming along after him.

Both reached the shore at the same time, the Mohegan, assisting his friend with his burden. Then he sprang away, bent over the corpse of the brave who had fallen upon the shore, and in a moment returned, flourishing two bloody scalps in his hand!

"Now me feel *good!*!" he exclaimed, displaying his reeking trophies before Archibald. "Now me good Mohegan, again."

"Why will you persist in that barbarous custom?" demanded Turner, who felt sickened at the spectacle. "Why not forsake that which is so displeasing to all good men and to God?"

The Indian, thus reproved, looked sorrowful for a moment, and then slowly twined the scalps in his belt, saying, in a low tone,

"Me no be pale face; you no be Injun! Me like scalp
—you no like him. Me can't help him—can't help him."

Then, regarding his symbols of victory almost tenderly for a moment, he bent over beside the squaw, as Archibald proceeded with the work of restoration.

Severe as had been the ordeal through which she had passed, the late captive was scarcely insensible. She was still young, and as Christian had affirmed, was a maiden. When first her eyes opened with a grateful light upon her preserver, it seemed to the young man that he had never seen human being so lovely. Then he recollects that she was an Indian, turned his eyes away, and—looked upon her again!

Fascinated, bewildered, he gazed upon her for some time, until at length he realized how strangely he was acting, and, rising to his feet, tore himself away.

"What think of Shining Star?" demanded Christian slyly, as he noticed the manner of his companion, and realized the cause.

"You say she is a Mohegan?" asked Archibald, paying little heed to the question of his comrade.

"Yes."

"And not married?"

"No."

Archibald turned away, but Christian followed him, asking presently,

"You no mean to marry Injun girl?"

The person addressed turned upon his interlocutor, and, after staring at him sharply for some time, replied,

"No, nor any body else. But she is a beauty, Christian. What shall we do with her? We'd better take her up to Hadley, and keep her there till we see what this means. Can you get the boat? It has not floated far, and we can row up the river easier than we can walk."

The Indian departed to bring the canoe, and while he was gone Archibald stood almost unconsciously gazing upon the beauty of that forest flower.

CHAPTER II.

AGAINST THE CURRENT.

In a short time Christian appeared, moving slowly up-stream with the boat. He had reached and righted it without trouble, and had also secured one of the paddles. On the shore another paddle was found which had been dropped by the Indians.

"This is the easiest way we can go," remarked Archibald, as he assisted the maiden to a seat in the frail craft. She had scarcely spoken, as yet, and trembled violently. "I fear she was injured more than we are aware of; but perhaps good care will set her right again."

Christian pushed off the canoe, after his companions were both seated and the arms secured, and then sprung in himself. Striking out into the river far enough to secure drift-water, they headed up-stream, and paddled vigorously. The movement, the pure air, and soft odors seemed to revive the late captive, for soon she sat upright, and looked around upon her rescuers with gratefully-beaming eyes. Once or twice she essayed speech in English, but her courage failed, or she feared failure in making herself understood. Turning to Christian, she poured forth such a strain of Mohegan music as caused the young Indian's eyes to dance with delight.

"Shining Star good maiden," Christian exclaimed, reverently. "She want much good come to you. She call you good pale-face."

"Very well; tell her to be quiet and get rested," was the response. "Above all, do not talk much, and keep your eyes abroad for Narragansetts. We need to be vigilant for the maiden's sake, if not for our own."

"Me see like hawk!" returned the proud young brave, throwing his keen glance around. "Me think no more Narragansetts near."

"Perhaps you can find that out by asking Shining Star, as you call her," suggested Archibald.

Christian addressed an inquiry to her, and his countenance fell as her answer was received. He paused a moment, asking one or two additional details, and then turned to his companion once more. His eye swept the opposite shore more steadily as he said,

"Much bad. Shining Star say warriors like leaves of trees on other side of river. Nar'gansett very bad. He kill pale-face, kill Mohegan, carry away Shining Star to make Nar'gansett squaw of her!"

"Then they are on the other side of the Connecticut," remarked Archibald. "I wonder if they are above or below us, chiefly?"

The maiden seemed to comprehend his question, for she pointed down-stream, indicating the other bank of the river.

"Very well. If they are below us, there will be but little danger. We are hardly five miles from Hadley, and it will be very easy taking to the woods again, if they should seem inclined to trouble us."

They rowed on for a mile, and, thinking they were leaving the foe behind them, both Archibald and his Mohegan companion began to feel more assurance. Shining Star, too, had plucked up courage to address her white preserver, and thank him in person for the signal service he had rendered her.

Turner took good care to keep up the conversation, using any theme which he could think of for that purpose. So long as he could look into those sparkling black eyes, and watch the play of the Indian girl's splendidly beautiful and expressive features, the young man felt that he cared for little else.

Certainly, this was a bad state of mind for the scout; but he was all-regardless of the fact.

Another mile had been passed, and they were nearly half-way home. Archibald was almost sorry, for the journey was getting interesting, now that Shining Star had spoken with him. He had almost forgotten the fact that Indians were abroad, when his attention was arrested by Christian, who exclaimed,

"Hark! Me hear something!"

He bent low over the edge of the boat, and listened intently toward the other shore. His companion followed his example.

Plainly they heard, stealing over the expanse of water, the low notes of a cuckoo! The men exchanged significant glances.

"No bird sings like that, at this time of day," remarked the young hunter. "It must be a signal."

"Nar'gansett," sententiously returned Christian.

"Of course it must be. They espy us, too, without doubt."

"Sartin—think we Injuns!"

"Perhaps so. We'll let them think it, if they choose. If they stay that side of the river it will make no difference to them."

As the Narragansetts received no reply from the boat, it was but natural that they should feel some distrust, if they had not previously had their suspicions excited. At least the calls ceased, and for some time not a sound came to mar the stillness which reigned upon the river. Archibald was beginning to feel that they might have been deceived, after all, and that the voice was really what it seemed—the notes of a bird. His Indian companion, however, with himself, kept up a close watch above and below, as well as on both banks of the stream.

"I do not believe the Narragansetts have any canoes," he remarked, at length, rather to himself than to those with him. "So if they are on the other side of the river, they will have to stay there for the present."

"See, um' got canoe," remarked Christian, pointing away to the opposite shore. Archibald looked, and, after a close examination, saw a speck appear, moving out from the bank far ahead of them. It was aiming directly across the river, and, after noticing it for a short time, the observers were satisfied that it was the intention of the strange craft to intercept them. It appeared larger, too, as it came more plainly into view, and contained at least half a dozen savages.

"Had we better put into the woods, and give them fellows the slip?" demanded Archibald. "They are too many for us."

"Too many in woods," was the prompt reply. "Not too many here. Guns shoot long. Nar'gansett only got arrows. No trees here for um to run behind."

"There may be something in that. We shall have the advantage of them in range, and may keep them at bay better than if we were in the woods. I shall trust chiefly to you, Christian, for you are an Indian, and know their ways. Do what you think will be for the best."

"Row on—row on—go fast!" said the Mohegan, pulling with fresh energy at his oar. "May go too fast for them."

They laid themselves to the oars manfully, and the little canoe sped through the water right merrily. But, fast as they pulled, the others were quite as rapidly nearing the point of conjunction, and it was difficult to say which would be first to reach it.

The Indian boat was longer and heavier than their own, and seven Narragansetts made out its complement. Four of these were straining at the paddles, while another steered. But for the current, which was against them, the party in the smaller boat would have had the advantage.

"Those fellows are crawling in too fast," observed Archibald; the first words he had spoken for some time. "We shall have to stop their speed, or they will get in ahead of us."

"Yis; better shoot," remarked Christian, looking uneasily at the progress of his foes. "Can hit now."

"Then blaze away!" returned Archibald. "I will take your paddle, while you shoot and load up again."

The Mohegan's eyes glistened with satisfaction as he leveled the weapon, and a moment later its sharp voice rang out the opening of the contest, between the two unequal parties. But, the ball fell into the water some distance from the Narragansett boat, and an exclamation of disappointment escaped the hunter's lips. "Never mind," said the white, encouragingly. "The distance was long, and our boat rocks so, it is no wonder you failed to hit. But, what is that? They have got a gun, too!"

So it seemed, for immediately after Christian's shot, a puff of smoke, and the report of a musket from the Narragansett boat, responded, and a ball plowed up the water somewhat more than half-way to its mark.

"You see you are not so bad a marksman," said Archibald, with a smile, as he gave the paddles into the hands of the

Indian, and prepared to discharge his own gun. "If we can check these fellows without losing our own speed, good and well; if not, we shall have to put into the woods after all."

He watched the motion of the boat, carefully, for a moment, and then placed his gun in position. As his finger pressed the trigger, it exploded; nor was the shot in vain.

The Narragansett who had fired was in the act of reloading. Throwing up his arms with a yell, he dropped the gun overboard, and plunged forward upon his face among his brethren. A terrible shout of rage rose from the canoe, and, for a moment, the efforts of the rowers were relaxed.

"Good—good shoot!" exclaimed Christian, delightedly, bending to the oars with fresh zeal. "White brother better shoot than Hawk's-wing!"

"That shot will teach them to suspect us," remarked Archibald, as he heartily reloaded. "Now, if we can get the advantage of them, all will be well. If not we shall have to spill more of their rascally blood."

He placed his weapon carefully in the bottom of the canoe, and then grasped one of the oars. The Narragansett dug-out had almost stopped progress, and if it were not brought much nearer the shore, they could pass it beyond reach of the Indians' arrows.

But their adversaries would not permit this. Crouching low in the boat, they began to row again with all their strength. The craft leaped through the water, and it soon became evident that they would succeed in cutting off the smaller party.

"We've got to check them again," muttered Archibald, after pulling a few strokes. "I'm tired of this shooting men, but, so long as they will persist in it, 'tis not for us to refuse. We must take care of ourselves and friends. Pull in your oar, Christian, and we'll give them a double salute."

The Mohegan did as requested, and when the motion of the canoe became somewhat steady, they both fired at once. One of the bullets told with fatal effect, and one of the rowers dropped his oar, pitching headlong after it into the river. The remaining Narragansetts, however, gave redoubled yells and whoops, and pulled with more desperate energy.

Turner and his companion would have striven with them for the point, but, as the latter dipped his oar, and gave a strong pull, the faithless blade snapped like a thing of glass.

"Quick, take this," exclaimed Archibald, comprehending the state of affairs at once. "Pull for the shore, while I load the pieces. We'll take cover on the bank, and shoot them if they dare attempt to land!"

Christian was prompt to do as requested, and when the boat touched bottom, the guns were recharged and primed. Both grasped their weapons, and sprang ashore, drawing the boat after them, just as the arrows from their pursuers began to fall around.

Scarcely a rod from the river a large tree had fallen. It was well decayed, and along its sides grew a curtain of vines and bushes. Behind this the trio at once took shelter.

"Let them come now, if they dare," whispered Archibald, somewhat excitedly, as he beheld the boat rapidly nearing the shore. "We can scarcely fail of two out of the first fire, and it may well go hard with us if we are not a match for three more of the villains."

"Um think we go far in the woods," remarked Christian. "We show um who run!"

The Narragansett boat was now within five rods of the shore, and the warriors were peering through the trees in every direction for traces of the supposed fugitives. They did not for a moment suspect that the men, encumbered by the presence of a squaw, would make face against such odds.

"They are near enough now," whispered Archibald. "We had better shoot. I will take that big fellow in the stern. Pick your man and let him have it!"

There was little need of a close aim at such a distance, and under such advantages as the concealed party possessed. Each held his gun upon the living marks, and at the word, both fired.

Then came a sudden splash in the water, and but three upright figures remained.

They seemed startled beyond measure at the reception they had received, and made no further efforts to gain the vicinity of such a deadly foe. On the contrary they changed the stroke of their paddles, and without any of the noise which

marked their previous movements, began to paddle back toward the distant shore from which they had emerged.

"We'll let them go, Christian," exclaimed Turner, with subdued joy. "We have slain enough of them, and if they will go their own way, we will let them do so in peace. We've certainly taught them a lesson, and in future they will be more careful how they meddle with your people, as well as my own."

"That true," remarked the Mohegan, as he gazed rather wistfully after the retreating boat-load of Narragansetts. "Me like one more scalp! Me have him!"

He bounded down to the margin of the river, sprung into the canoe, and pushed it out to where the body of an Indian was still floating. It was the last one which had fallen from the boat, and he was much nearer the shore than at the moment of meeting his fate.

Christian noticed nothing peculiar in the appearance of the Indian, and the impetus of his boat carried it nearly to the floating body. He was already reaching over to grasp the scalp-knot of the Narragansett, when he became conscious that the eyes which he had seen a moment before, fast closed, were open. Before he had time to think or realize as to the meaning of the change, a powerful grasp seized the boat and emptied the Mohegan into the water!

Christian was naturally astonished at the turn affairs had taken, nor did his astonishment seem likely to end without sadder results. Almost at the instant he touched water, his wrist was grasped, and the band containing his knife twisted under him in a fearful manner. Conscious that he could endure but for a moment in this manner, Christian did the first thing which occurred to his mind—dropped the weapon to the bottom of the Connecticut; then with his other hand, he managed to grasp the Narragansett by the scalp-lock, and succeeded in forcing the head of the savage beneath the surface.

But that did not end the struggle. One and then the other of the red-men seemed to triumph, and it became very uncertain which would finally succeed. Chance, however, favored Christian. His adversary had been wounded, and was somewhat weakened from loss of blood. A cramp set in, and

he sank to the bottom, fortunately retaining no hold upon his young adversary.

Seeing that the conflict was thus ended, and thankful to escape with his life, the victor swam to the shore, dragging the boat after him. He landed and sank upon the ground for a moment, while Archibald dragged the canoe to the shore.

"You didn't get any scalp, Christian," he remarked with a smile. "Why will you not abandon that foolish practice? See how near it came to costing you your life."

Christian patted his own scalp-lock as if to assure his companions of its safety, and smiled sadly. Then observing the disposition being made of the boat, he asked,

"You go up in canoe?"

"No," replied Archibald, "I think we had better take it on foot. The Indians must be wide awake all along the river, and if we keep out of their way it will be better for this poor girl."

Shining Star preferred to walk, as she would not thus feel that she was so great a burden to her companions. She walked well, too, her appearance giving little evidence of the fearful scenes through which she had passed.

Although she would have preferred to set off at once for her tribe, Archibald and Christian both insisted that she remain at Hadley, till such time as the forests became more settled. This she could not well refuse, and in due course of time, they reached the place without further adventure.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOUR OF PERIL AND THE DECEIVER.

THE good people of Hadley were much exercised on learning the news brought by Archibald and his companions. They had been living in fear for many months, and now it seemed their fears were to be realized. Certainly the intelligence that the forest within a few miles of them was swarming with the dreaded foe, was sufficient to awaken lively

apprehensions for the next few days. At any hour the war-painted savages might cross the river, and fall upon the half-protected settlement.

Measures were at once taken to put the town in as complete a state of defense as possible. An old cannon which had lain idle for many a long year was scoured up, and loaded, after being well tested, to make sure that it would not deal more death to friends than foes. Every fire-arm was brought into requisition and put in order, that there might be no failure when the conflict came. The most trusty men were placed upon a list, and a detail kept constantly abroad scanning the forests and closely watching the river for miles up and down, to catch the first tidings of any move upon the part of the Narragansetts.

But days, a week even passed, bringing no attack, and, gradually, the alarm began to subside. What was more probable than that the Indians had pursued some other route? They would have been almost certain to assault the place, had they remained in the vicinity. Still the scouts tracked the woods, and the general precautions were maintained.

Archibald and his Mohican friend were among the most vigilant of those on the watch. On the third day of their guard, the sun was low behind the trees upon the western mountain ranges, and evening shadows would soon settle. The twain stood upon the bank of the Connecticut river, the scene of their late encounter with the Narragansetts.

Turner was gazing across the waters, shading his eyes with his hand, and looking anxiously, for already the forest beyond began to lose its distinctness.

Suddenly the young man started, for, from the distance came a single ray of light. There was no mistaking it; it was an Indian fire—necessarily Indians, for scarcely ever had a white man planted his foot in that region; certainly no one would think of building a fire there.

"See that, Christian," he remarked, pointing to the ray of light. "Yonder are the Narragansetts still."

"Yis; here more Nar'gansetts," pursued the other pointing to a second light, which he had discovered.

Further investigations revealed other fires at different points, so there could be little doubt that a large body of the enemy

was there congregated. Archibald regarded the signs for some time in silence, and finally remarked,

"It is too bad our folks know nothing about this. But, I am determined upon one thing, to cross over as soon as it is dark enough, and spy out their numbers. What say you, Christian?"

"Um, very good," sententiously remarked that individual. "Good many Nar'gansetts; may get scalp!"

"You must not attempt to get any scalps to-night," returned the white hunter. "We shall have plenty of work to keep our own safe. We can not afford to risk any thing unnecessary to-night—too much is depending on our success, and the Narragansetts must not be aroused."

"Be be very careful," was the assurance the Mohegan gave, and then the twain slowly turned their footsteps down the river.

Some half a mile below the spot where the discovery was made, a canoe was kept secreted, and toward its hiding-place they took their way. They found it reposing in safety. Drawing it forth from its cover, they conveyed it quite near the edge of the river, and then seated themselves upon it to await the coming of darkness sufficiently intense to allow of their floating it without too much danger.

"We shall have to paddle about half way across, and then drop silently down with the current till we reach the other side."

"Be bring um," returned the Mohegan. "Be paddle good many canoes."

Ere long deep darkness had settled over the forest; then, raising their boat, they made their way down to the water, and placed it upon the tranquil bosom of the Connecticut. Carefully stepping in, each took a paddle, and the little craft silently moved out upon the level expanse of darkness.

The dip of their paddles was very cautious, and the pull strong, so that they moved rapidly, notwithstanding the quiet with which it was done. Indeed, so satisfactory was their success to the men themselves, that they did not pause or relax their efforts when the opposite shore was neared, but shot their boat into a dense mass of foliage, pulled it securely upon the land, and then turned their faces in the direction of the Narragansett encampment.

Lonely and perilous was the situation of the two young men; but, they gave no heed to their danger, pushing directly toward the point of interest, after well noting the place where their canoe was left.

The forest before them was quite open, and as concealment was hardly an object in the darkness, it was quite favorable to their plans. They could proceed with little danger of making any alarm.

Finally an opening in the trees revealed one of the fires, something like a quarter of a mile away. Then they crept on more silently than before. The fires burned brightly and freely—so much so that young Turner paused, and whispered in the ear of his companion,

"It is hardly probable that they intend making any more at present. They would not keep so bright fires burning if they did. What do you think, Christian?"

"Me can't tell," meekly responded the Mohegan. "Narragansett very keen brave; no tell what he mean to do. Me think he stay here to-night."

"So I think. But we never shall have a better chance to find out what they are about, so we'll push ahead and look them over!"

The twain pursued their way again, increasing their caution with every step. But as they drew near the fires, something seemed to warn them that all was not right. It was still early in the evening, and scarcely probable that the Narragansetts were all asleep, but no sound, no movements reached the ears of the scouts. Carefully they crept nearer, gliding from cover to cover, and looking anxiously for Indian forms. But, sleeping or waking, they saw none. What could it mean? Then the thought occurred to Archibald that they were gathered somewhere in the vicinity in council.

Presently the scouts gained a position, whence they could gaze full upon the nearest of the camp-fires. Despite all their fears and surmises, each was slightly startled at finding that no Indian was there, neither were any signs of their presence to be seen!

For a moment they feared a trap, but, the idea of danger to themselves passed away, when they saw that not a savage was there. Cautiously backing away, Archibald whispered,

"What do you suppose this means?"

"Don't know," responded Christian. "Here a fire; there a fire; we go there!"

He pointed to another burning pile at no great distance, and toward it they slowly made their way. But, the same quiet pervaded there, and upon getting sufficiently near to overlook the place, it was found equally deserted with the first.

"Christian, we are fooled!" was the angry exclamation of Archibald, as he gazed all around them. "These fires were built for our especial amusement, while the rascals have gone some other way. Perhaps they are planning to assault Hadley, even now."

"That good true. We look for 'em--maybe find. Here another fire."

A third reconnoissance revealed the same state of affairs. Indians all gone, and fires blazing brightly. Archibald was well satisfied that the fires were a ruse. What more probable than that the Narragansetts had stolen away by some obscure route, to fall upon the unwarned settlement?

He readily judged that this would be effected by proceeding some distance either up or down the river, crossing to the eastern shore, and then taking the most direct route to the village. As the fires were built some distance below the town, he inferred that the danger would most likely come from the opposite direction.

These fears he communicated to the Mohegan, and found that they agreed in the main with that individual's convictions.

"We must try and find them," added Archibald. "I really believe nine out of every ten persons in Hadley are sleeping just as soundly at this moment as if there were no human tigers at their doors. We have found so much, and it will be a pity to let the red varmints fall upon our friends. How shall we do this best, Christian?"

The red-man reflected a few moments, and then replied,

"Go 'cross Connecticut. Go up to people, tell 'em what we found. Then go hunt for Narragansetts!"

"But, we shall need to hasten, in order that the Narragansetts do not get there first."

The speaker had no heed to hasten the movements of his Indian companion, for that individual was already loping through the forest at the top of his speed. Indeed, it required the best efforts of Archibald to keep pace with him. They had little difficulty in finding their canoe. Quickly they pushed off, and sped across the river at the top of their speed.

"Better hide canoe," remarked Christian, as his white brother sprung ashore, and was about striking into the forest. "May want him ag'in."

"True," was the reply. "There, that will do; now hasten as if death was on our track like a hound!"

Paying little heed to the obstructions in their way, but dashing through or over them in a manner almost reckless, the scouts sped on. The night was quite dark, and one unused to the woodland would have found the utmost difficulty in making any progress. But, those sons of the forest seemed, as indeed they were, quite at home in that wilderness.

Finally the moon arose, and its white rays served to illuminate the deep shades somewhat. Christian had been upon the lead since they left the boat, for Archibald had more faith in the young Indian's skill than in his own. They were fast nearing the settlement, though as yet no sounds or signs of life bespoke a civilized dwelling in the midst of such a wild waste.

Suddenly Christian paused, throwing back his hand as a signal, and bending nearly to the earth that he might listen more intently. Archibald imitated his example, and at first fancied he heard some sound in advance. But, if so, it ceased almost immediately, and, though both listened intently, nothing further was to be heard.

"What was it?" Turner asked, in a low whisper, as his companion finally raised himself again. "What did you hear?"

"Can't tell," replied the Indian. "Think somesin'; guess somesin' not good."

"Do you think it is Indians?"

"Spect so."

They resumed their progress, proceeding with a vast deal more of caution than they had hitherto displayed. The

thought that they might be walking into the jaws of death was sufficiently startling in itself to impart all possible care.

They had proceeded but a few rods in this manner, pausing and listening at every half-dozen steps, when Christian suddenly turned, caught Archibald by the shoulder and forced him to the ground. The young man obeyed the gentle pull upon his sleeve in the direction of a large tree growing at hand. But he did not reach it before an approaching form became visible, rapidly drawing nearer. By the dim moonlight, those in the shade had no difficulty in determining that it was an Indian, and by his bearing they judged him to be a Narragansett.

They were not left long in doubt. Stealthy as had been their movements they had not escaped the notice of the newcomer, who approached them with familiarity, uttering some sentence in his native tongue. Christian, who stood in front of the white, replied in the same language, and the Narragansett approached in the most cordial manner. But, as he drew quite near, the attitude of the Mohegan awakened his suspicion, and he started back. But the savage had learned too much to live. With a movement like lightning, Christian hurled his hatchet, which he had in hand, striking the other full upon the head. Without a gasp or warning cry, he dropped to the earth. Instantly the victor was upon him. The keen knife flashed from its sheath and whirled around the victim's head with a single dexterous motion. Then, tearing away the death trophy, he wiped the bloody blade upon the fallen Indian's mantle, returned the weapon to its sheath, picked up the hatchet, and stood before the horrified Archibald with an exultant smile.

It was quite apparent to themselves that the young scouts were in most imminent danger. Just in advance of them could be heard the movements of many savages, and, though audacious daring on the part of Christian had saved them from discovery for the moment, it was uncertain how soon they might be surprised by the swarming red-skins.

"They are preparing to assault the town," whispered Archibald, when he had reflected for a moment. "We must back off and get in ahead of them if it can possibly be done."

The Mohegan assented, and the two commenced a retrograde movement. After having retired until they no longer heard any sounds from those in their front, they worked their way gradually to the right, and finally struck a wagon-trail, leading to the village.

"We must get beyond this," remarked Turner, as the Indian pulled him in that direction; "the rascals will watch it, and shoot if they see us."

Christian shrunk back, saying nothing, while Archibald crossed the wagon-path, and penetrated the bushes upon the other side.

Upon doing so, he found himself confronted by a number of painted and plumed warriors, darkly discernable through the gloom. He attempted to move back again, but, in a moment found himself face to face with the dark muzzle of a gun, while the Indian who held it exclaimed, in strong and unmistakable gutturals,

"You my prisoner! Shoot if you run."

An assurance which Archibald did not for a moment doubt.

Indeed, great as had been the danger about them, he was so confounded at his sudden mishap that before he could really reflect his arms were taken from him, his limbs bound, and he was placed beside a tree, with the warning that if he made any noise his death should follow.

It was hard to realize that he was a prisoner. He looked around at every movement, expecting Christian to share his captivity or be murdered before his eyes; but he was spared this crowning agony. No signs of the stealthy Mohegan had been discovered.

The party surrounding Archibald remained strangely inactive, for savages in the vicinity of a town they intended to assault. He could form no conjectures which seemed reasonable, as to the cause of their loitering.

Slowly the night rolled away; the morning must be near at hand. The captive had exhausted conjectures in vain endeavors to solve the mysterious conduct of his captors. But, as daylight began faintly to appear, his wonder increased. Certainly, if any attack was contemplated it must take place very soon, for he was well aware of the fact that Indians never

show themselves partial to warfare in full daylight, when the whites were their equals in the fight.

Archibald was not disappointed in the expectation that his friends would be attacked in the mist and fog of early dawn. All at once the dead silence which had lasted for hours, was broken by the report of fire-arms. Shouts and yells succeeded, but from the distance the young man knew that the attack must be upon the opposite or north side of the place.

Of course he thought his captors would move up at once, and take the fort in the affray. But this they did not do. They merely moved to the edge of the clearing, where they were in full view of the scene of conflict, and there they waited, crouching low, leaving Archibald with a guard or two, a little distance in the rear.

The town being dimly visible through the incipient dawn and fog, the attention of the savages was very naturally drawn in that direction, since they had a deep interest in the success of their red fellows.

Archibald, however, had little thought of any attempt at escape; since he could scarcely reach the assailed settlement if he were free, and there was no probability that he would be able to elude the swarming savages for five minutes.

He was thinking of the terrible fate to which his loved ones, and especially Shining Star, the Mohegan maiden, in whose fate he had taken an abiding interest, were exposed, and weighing their chances, *pro* and *con*, when his thoughts were almost rudely called to the present, and his surroundings.

A light touch was upon his arm, and, as he would have turned to see whence it came, a low hiss of warning was breathed in his ear. Then he felt the bonds upon his legs give way; those upon his arms quickly followed.

He had scarcely time to realize that Christian was working for him, when a strong grasp raised him to his feet, and his steps were guided from the place, so stealthily that neither of the guards, standing within six feet of him, were aware of any movement.

There was a mass of bushes growing near at hand, and behind these the thus far almost unseen conductor drew Archibald. Here he paused long enough to stoop to the ground,

and raised a bundle of warlike weapons, which he pressed into Turner's arms, saying,

"Take some, but never stop much now!"

Archibald heeded the suggestion perfectly. Raising them in his arms, he ran beside his liberator till they had put a considerable distance between themselves and the ambushed Narragansetts. By this time he had classified and disposed of most of the accoutrements, so that his hands were again at liberty.

"Where did you get these?" he asked of the Mohican. There was a gun, powder-horn and bullet-pouch, a knife and hatchet, both evidently the property of an Indian.

"He find um," returned Christian, significantly; and Archibald noticed a fresh scalp dangling at his belt.

"I shall not refuse them, let them come whence they will," thought the young man. "They have my own rifle, one of the best in Hadley, and all of my weapons. An exchange is not an injustice; certainly not if I take up with this old rusty musket," and he surveyed the same, rather dubiously.

Having gained the cover of a rise of ground, which concealed them from the sight of the guards, who now had missed their prisoner, and were about instituting a search for him, Christian turned directly toward Hadley.

"You git chance to fight yet," he remarked, pointing to the town, where it was evident a great commotion existed. The Indians were yelling and howling upon all sides, shooting and being shot at, dancing about and whooping in the delirium of infernal excitement.

Through this storm of death and passion there was a single lane, leading to the town, along which the two scouts could advance, and if untouched by shots from the Indians, or chance bullets from their friends, they might gain the contested walls.

Crouching so as not to attract unnecessary observation, and scarce heeding the ground over which they flew rather than ran, they rapidly drew near the palisades.

How they were to scale them, was an important question, but they did not stop to think.

They were within a few paces of the walls, when a rush of the inhabitants took place within, and in a moment

more, the gate leading to the forest was thrown open, and a fear-struck multitude appeared, eager to rush out.

Swinging his gun above his head, Archibald placed himself in the opening, Christian quickly following his example. The assault had taken place upon the north side, and unable to withstand it, the fear-stricken ones had conceived the idea of fleeing into the forest upon the southern side of the town.

"Back! back!" Archibald shouted, comprehending the state of affairs, and swinging his clubbed gun in the faces of the foremost. "Go back, I tell you! These woods are full of ambushed Indians, and every man of you will be killed if you try to flee! Go back and show yourselves men! Beat off the foe; I will show you that it can be done. Back and meet them!"

By pressing back the foremost, Archibald had succeeded in getting within the gate, and closing it. Several of the men, learning the fate which awaited them without, turned back and began the battle again, while others were following their example.

The Indians in the edge of the forest, seeing the scene at the gate, and realizing that they could not ambush a party of settlers, now rushed forward with loud yells to join in the assault. Certainly, the situation of the defenders was getting desperate.

In order to comprehend it more fully, it will be necessary to advert to the plan of the Indians in making the attack.

Dividing their forces, the Narragansetts had placed a party in ambuscade upon the south side of the town, while the main body made an assault upon the north end. The object was the complete destruction of the settlers, since if the savages could surprise them on one side they would be very certain to rush forth upon the other, and thus fall into the snare prepared for them.

In the early gray of dawn the sentinels heard a lively attack made upon the palisades. Confounded, they perceived that the savages had actually stolen up unperceived, and were busily engaged in cutting their way into the enclosure. Horrified at the discovery, they fired their pieces, but without any effect, and, before the sleeping inhabitants could rouse and

grasp their weapons, tawny Narragansetts were swarming in through the breach they had made.

In vain the doomed, confused, half-awakened whites sought to drive them back. They had no leader, and were all unprepared for such a struggle, and though they fought manfully the Indians gradually gained upon them. Already the black smoke from burning buildings began to rise, adding fresh horror to the hearts of those whose homes were being consumed.

It is at such moments that the example of a coward or hero decides the whole matter. Some timid-hearted one amid the settlers raised the cry,

"We can not save our town; let us take to the woods and save our lives!"

The cry was taken up by many lips, and those to whom the thought of death was most dreadful gave a rush toward the south gate. The few brave men left to combat the Indians were outnumbered and overpowered, so that they, too, were forced to give way. This was just what the Narragansetts desired, and, feeling sure that their work was done, they scattered about the place to sack and plunder.

The scheme of the Indians would have been perfect in its working had it not been for the presence and determination of Archibald Turner. Forcing back the excited throng, he closed the gate, as before stated, and sought by earnest reasoning, to bring back their scattered senses.

Moments were precious, however. The ambuscade had changed to an assaulting party, and would be at hand in a few minutes; while it was uncertain at what instant those within the walls would rally, and fall upon the rear of the party with deadly effect.

Archibald was striving, with good results, to bring a different state of affairs about, but in such a pressing emergency results could not be attained quickly enough. Besides, the young man scarcely knew how to grapple the important situation. With a body of fighting followers he would not have hesitated to attack either party of the savages; but with only a confused mass of men, assailed in front and rear, he scarcely knew in what direction to turn.

But an angel of deliverance was at hand. At the moment

when alarm and uncertainty were at the greatest height, a voice, which none of them ever before had heard, loudly called,

“This way, men of Hadley! *Rally here!*”

The settlers saw a tall, bearded man, of distinguished and military aspect, waving a light sword in his right hand. His foot was firmly planted, and his eagle eyes flashed over the whole array of terror-stricken forms, as he sternly commanded:

“Rally here, for your homes and lives!”

There was no resisting the command. Every one felt himself sink into insignificance before the richly dressed stranger. One after another, as they encountered that keen gaze, hastened to the place designated, and soon a dozen men stood there, cool and collected in that strange presence. The fact that they had a leader, one who was firm and calm in the midst of that wild tumult, was in itself a saving power to the frightened men.

“Now, face about!” the stranger exclaimed. “March up to those palisades and defend them to the death!”

The men heeded his injunction, for they dared not disobey, and when they were stationed, the unknown turned to Archibald.

“Do you take command of those men,” he said. “Keep them in their places, and shoot the first one who attempts to leave!”

The young man promised obedience, and the master-spirit turned back to the gaping, wondering crowd. He waved his sword toward them, while his clear tones fell with swaying force upon every heart.

“Form here, in the shelter of this building,” he shouted. “Every man of you here! Fools, cowards, are you not ashamed of your birthrights, to be thus driven about by a handful of painted savages?”

The men, really ashamed of their recent fright, hastened to obey the strange summons, and soon a determined body was formed, clamorous to be led on, against those foes from whom they had so lately fled.

“All in good time,” said the strange man. “But first, do you, and you”—indicating two of the strongest and coolest

of the party—bring out the cannon. Point it through yonder gap in the palisades, and give its contents to the red rascals on the other side. Meantime, we'll be fighting the skunks who have gained an entrance."

The two men indicated hastened for the cannon, wondering that they had not thought of it before. It was near at hand, and having been loaded for the occasion a week before, it required but to be primed and rolled to the place designated.

This was speedily done, for the two men saw that the critical moment was at hand. The Narragansetts were near the palisades, and should they succeed in breaking through, even the coolness, skill and valor of their strange leader might not suffice to save them.

The unwieldy weapon was placed in position, trained upon the thickest of the savage horde approaching, and then fire was communicated by the discharge of a pistol, for want of a better match. The effect was electrical.

The old weapon had been stuffed to the muzzle with bullets, scraps of iron, gravel-stones, and what might most severely damage human life and limb. At the report, the old iron fairly raised from the earth, and sprung backward with terrible force, sending its heavy charge of deathly messengers crashing among the skulking Narragansetts.

Dreadful was the slaughter. A gap was cut through the heart of the almost successful assailants, and nearly one-half of their number sunk dead or wounded upon the earth. The remainder, utterly abashed by the loud report and deadly slaughter which followed, stole away into the woods from which they had emerged, defeated, and crushed in spirit.

"This way, men; here is work for you!" shouted the stranger, as he saw that their presence was no longer needed at the palisades. "Come on!"

They followed him, and found that the band which had followed him to conflict, with those already in the town, had suffered considerably. But the power of the Indians was broken, and they, too, had begun to withdraw. The vigorous rush of the fresh forces, at the proper moment, completed their destruction. Those who remained, fled in the utmost confusion, leaping the palisades as the opening they had made

became filled with the retreating warriors. Added to other sources of confusion, several houses in the vicinity had been set on fire, and showers of sparks falling upon the half-naked bodies of the savages, could not have added to their comfort. In a very short time the Narragansetts had all disappeared from the town, save such as slept their last sleep, or those too badly wounded to crawl away. A strange scene was presented to the full light of morning, as the remaining settlers gathered in groups, to view the sad desolation, to join in efforts to extinguish the flames, and to aid the suffering. The conflagration not having gained great headway, and abundance of water being at hand, it was stayed, so that but five buildings within the fortification were burned.

The killed and wounded among the settlers were few indeed, compared with what might have been expected from the duration and obstinacy of the combat. Only two had been killed, with a small number wounded. When the flames had been quelled, the inhabitants were ready for other considerations.

The first was gratitude.

"Whar is the man what saved the day for us?" demanded a tall youth, gaping round with outstretched palm. "I want to shake hands with him."

Sure enough, where was he? None of them had seen him since the fight ended; none remembered his presence in the last few movements of the settler forces. An instant search, with many vociferations and calls, took place, but all to no purpose. The stranger had vanished as utterly as though the earth had opened and swallowed him up.

Some time later a group was gathered about an elderly man, one long known in the settlements, who was speaking very earnestly to those about him concerning the strange visitor.

"Ye hadn't none of ye seen him afore, I take it," he said. To which all gave assent.

"No, nor ye wön't ag'in, not till ye git threw all yer airthly trials. I want ye should jest understand, when the Lord wants to dew a partickeler thing, he don't go to work as we dew!"

"Do you think it was an angel sent to help us?" asked an eager listener.

"Of course I dew. I've not the least doubt of it. I never seen any thing like it afore, nor never shall ag'in. I tell ye, the days of miracles ain't gone by yit!"

And from lip to lip passed the story that an angel of the Lord had descended bodily to assist them; each adding something to prove that he had been aware of the angelic presence, till quite a respectable story of supernatural pretension was in circulation.

CHAPTER IV.

MORE OF THE UNKNOWN.

ANOTHER week had passed, and many of the ravages committed by the Narragansetts, in their unsuccessful attack, had been repaired. Most of the wounded men had nearly or quite recovered, and a feeling of confidence which Hadley had not felt for months prior to the date of which we write, began to make itself manifest. The defeat of the attacking party had been so signal, and the manifestation of the Lord's regard for that particular settlement so marked, that the zealous people really began to relax all individual efforts to insure their own safety, and trusted all to that unseen power which had sent them a deliverer at the proper moment.

An exception to this rule and state of feeling, however, was Archibald Turner. Not that the young scout was less religious in his convictions, or less disposed to trust the Almighty than his fellow settlers; far from it. But, what had passed upon the memorable occasion had been too deeply graven upon his mind to allow of many fanciful speculations. Although he had never before seen the stranger, and was certain that Hadley had no such person within its limits, he was still certain that their deliverer was flesh and blood, like other men of military pretensions. Of course he could not solve the problem of his strange appearance and disappearance, but waited in patience for the development of the mystery.

Shining Star had quite recovered from the hard race and rough treatment she had received at the hands of her

Narragansett captors, and now that there was no probability of again falling in with them, she desired to leave the hospitable abode of her friends, and repair to her own people.

Although the thought of separation from her cost the young man a pang, he agreed to accompany her to her destination. In company with Christian, who was to remain with his tribe for a time, they set forth one fine June morning, and reached the place of their destination in safety. Not having met with any adventure upon the way, it was deemed more satisfactory proof that the Indians of hostile disposition had left that section of country.

Archibald spent a pleasant afternoon and night with his Indian friends, and then set forth on his return to Hadley.

It was the middle of the afternoon of the first day upon the return, when Archibald drew near a small ravine, or rather a deep valley between two small hills. A noble spring flowed in the hollow, and this the young man had looked forward to as a temporary resting-place, where he would refresh himself, and partake of the food supplied by his Mohegan friends.

Merely assuring himself that no one was in the vicinity of the spring, and apprehending no danger, he began to descend the bank. Scarcely had he made half the distance to the bottom, when a strange spectacle met his gaze.

At a little distance above the spring, and hidden from the sight of those upon the bank by a curve, stood two Indians, whose Narragansett trappings the scout recognized at a glance. They were in a hostile attitude, and had, evidently, been preparing for a deadly strife, when the sounds of Archibald's incautious movements attracted their notice.

Instantly forgetting their own disagreement, whatever it might be, they turned their attention to the new-comer, as a more deserving enemy of themselves and people.

Their guns, which it seemed the red-men had not cared to use in their own conflict, were leaning against a tree beside them. While they were gaining possession of their weapons, Archibald sprung behind a large tree, putting himself in a posture of defense. The discovery had been simultaneous, and the movements which followed were nearly so, until the trio stood behind three respective trees, with guns presented, waiting any opportunity for a shot which might present.

Not more than thirty yards of distance separating the parties, it was hardly probable that either would fire in vain, if the mark was well presented. Both parties, therefore, kept carefully concealed, waiting the opportune moment for an attack or retreat.

Archibald used various devices for drawing the Indians' fire, but without success. The red-men were quite as wary as himself, and not easily caught by a trick.

Sundry glances which he cast forth very cautiously, assured him that they, too, were plotting. And their plot was likely to take a much more definite form than any thing he could oppose to it. One of their number was moving down the ravine, so as to flank the scout's position, while the other maintained his original tree. In this manner Archibald must soon be exposed to the aim of one or the other of his adversaries.

How was he to avoid this piece of strategy? Retreat he could not, as that would invariably expose him to a swift messenger from one or the other of his foes. There was no other tree at hand, behind which he could seek shelter, nor could he rush upon either of his foes without insuring his own death. In this case there was but one thing he could do—wait in his present position and trust his skill to give him the first and a fatal shot.

He had not long to wait before the critical moment came. The savage who was gliding from right to left, gained a point whence he commanded a view of Archibald's hiding-place. Here he paused, and leveled his gun. The scout's movement was quick, for he realized that life or death hung upon slender threads. As the Indian bent over his head to take aim, he necessarily made something of an exposure of it. Archibald's gun was upon the mark, and he quickly pulled the trigger.

The reports of his rifle and that of the Narragansett, were almost simultaneous, and singular as it might seem, both missed their mark. The scout heard a dull "chunk" close beside him, as his antagonist's ball lodged in the huge chestnut which sheltered him, and his own missive just grazed the cheek of the savage.

The Narragansetts had feared the death-dealing rifle of the

scout more than all else, and no sooner were they satisfied that it was empty, than both rushed upon him with a yell. The white, unfortunately for him, was armed only with a heavy knife, and the weapon he had just discharged. These were no match for the hatchets of the Indians, and one of them had a loaded musket, which he kept presented as he advanced.

No wonder that Archibald was uncertain how to meet them. He did not wish tamely to submit, and life was too precious to be recklessly periled. Could he have retreated, the young man would not have hesitated to do so, but that was already an impossibility.

The savages were almost upon him. Not more than a rod separated the two parties, and Archibald could read his fate in the burning glances of his adversaries. He was trying to think of some desperate plan by which to elude them, when the report of a musket sounded from the bank above, and the Indian bearing the gun pitched headlong upon the ground.

The other paused, hesitated, and fled, as a dark form burst through the woods, and rushed in pursuit. But the race was not long. The terrible impetus of the new-comer, added to the fright of the Narragansett, soon ended the race. The latter was overtaken and a hatchet buried in his brain.

After tearing away the scalp, which he suspended from his belt, the deliverer turned to Archibald; it was Christian, the Mohegan. The two friends met with a hearty hand-shaking, and, after acknowledging his great debt of gratitude, the white asked,

"How in the world came you here, Christian? I thought you were going to stay a while with your people."

"Yes; no," was the characteristic response. "Me stay little while, feel lonesome, no find pale-face friend there, and me come on, find ugly Nar'gansett, and git his scalp!"

There was a decided expression of triumph upon the red-skin's face, and he pointed to the dripping trophy at his side with eager satisfaction. But then he noticed that another Indian had fallen, whose scalp he did not possess, and he at once started for that.

Archibald sought to dissuade him, but in vain. The

young Indian's blood was up, and in the flush of such unqualified victory, it would be perfectly useless to argue with him. He tore away the coveted trophy, and then the twain exchanged congratulations again.

Young Turner had lost all thoughts of dinner, and merely stopping long enough to drink from the spring, the two fast friends set out again. They proceeded with caution now, since it was evident that the forest abounded with Narragansetts, despite their defeat at Hadley.

"I hope we'll not fall in with any big body of them," remarked Archibald. "If they should get hold of us, there would be too many old scores for them to settle."

"Not many Nar'gansett," returned Christian. "Here few — there few. Most all gone home to look after squaws."

"I hope so, and hope they will be wise enough to stay there," responded Archibald. "I have no desire to kill them or be killed by them. They need not fear that the settlers will encourage any one in trespassing upon their rights, and all their resistance will, of course, be useless. True, they may kill some of us, but the end will be destruction to themselves."

Archibald was suddenly arrested in his talk, by a grasp upon his arm. "What is it, Christian?" he whispered.

"Nar'gansett!"

"Where are they?"

"There!"

The pair had stopped upon a level section of forest, and a little distance in advance of them was a perpendicular descent of several feet. Here the ground stretched away again in another plateau. Toward this the gaze of the Mohegan was directed.

Archibald still failing to deserv signs of the Narragansetts' presence, Christian led the way toward the abrupt precipice. Abundant sounds from beneath, gave evidence of the presence of foes.

Archibald hung back as though loth to encounter the danger from which he had once been delivered within an hour, and would have refused to draw any nearer, had not Christian whispered in his ear,

"Um got pale face; goin' to burn him!"

They made their way to a bunch of bushes, growing near the precipice, and when they had gained that in safety, they were enabled to overlook all that was passing below them.

Archibald was not a little surprised at finding the assertion of his companion supported by what met his gaze. A tall, well-dressed man was bound to the trunk of a small tree, and several Indians were busily engaged in scraping together dead leaves, and whatever would make a fire.

The sight of a fellow-being in such deadly peril, was almost too much for Archibald, great as was the power he possessed over his own nerves. For some moments he could neither think nor act distinctly. He was conscious that he had seen the captive at some former time, and that his features seemed strangely familiar; but that was all.

Suddenly it burst upon him, bringing greater emotions than he had hitherto experienced. The prisoner doomed to suffer at the hands of the savages, was none other than the Deliverer of Hadley! Yes, he saw it now, too plainly to admit of a doubt. The features were the same, and even the same expression dwelt about the closely-shut lips, which had distinguished him in that hour of danger at the Indian assault.

Various thoughts and emotions flashed through the young man's brain and soul in a moment. If he had previously felt any doubt of the mortality of that person, they were all dispelled now. Of course the Narragansetts could torture nothing but flesh and blood, and it was very certain that they intended to burn the captive at the sapling.

Feelings of gratitude, humanity, and curiosity together, prompted him to rescue the stranger, if possible. But was it possible? He looked around, his bosom swelling with hope, as he noticed the situation of affairs. There were but five of the braves engaged in gathering up means of feeding the fatal flame, and it certainly seemed to Archibald that himself and companion would be a match for them, as they possessed the advantage in point of position, and would be the attacking party.

"We can whip them, can't we, Christian?" he asked.

"Do 'um easy 'nough by-'n-by," replied the native. "Wait till me tell you, and then we take 'um as wind takes dry leaves."

"I am willing to trust you," was the whispered rejoinder; "but be careful that you do not wait too long."

"Me know when right," said Christian, shaking his head decidedly.

Satisfied that his Mohegan ally would select the proper moment for an attack, Archibald examined the condition of his gun, and then waited for the progress of events, watching the proceedings of the warriors meantime. While doing so, a new idea struck him.

"Will there not be other Narragansetts here before they light the fire?" he whispered. "I ain't afraid of those five, but if more of them should come, we would have to give up all idea of rescue. Here are as many as it would be prudent for us to fight, even to save the life of a human being."

"No more come," returned Christian. "Um all here now, have big fun while pale-face roast!"

Still, Archibald was far from easy. Constantly his eye scoured the forest about, fearful lest the distance should suddenly swarm with hostile Indians, coming to defeat his plans. He did not feel that nervous dread now which he had felt a short time previous; did not reflect how great his chance for death might be in the conflict for which he was so anxious. He only longed to gain the side of that mysterious man, to thank him for the salvation of Hadley, and learn who and what he was.

The savages continued to gather in brushwood, and arrange the deadly pile quite deliberately, and Christian, with keen eyes fixed upon their every movement, lay behind the bushy screen.

At length the preparations were completed, and with a glance at the fast-sinking sun, the leader of the Indian band applied fire to the pile. Slowly it blazed up, until Archibald became fearfully excited, and was upon the point of rushing forth alone, to fall upon the exultant throng. But Christian held him back, whispering,

"Go purty soon; me tell you when."

When assured that their victim was ready for the torture, the Narragansetts formed a broken circle, and began their devilish dancing and shouting.

Then it was that Christian seemed to change his nature.

All his former apathy was gone, and, with a glance like that of a young panther, he drew forth the bow with which he was provided in addition to the gun he carried. Carefully selecting an arrow, he fitted it to the string, and then raised himself with the bow half-bent.

The Narragansetts did not perceive the dusky head which rose from behind the bush ; nor did they dream of the presence of such a foe, till the arrow winged its certain flight, and one of their number fell pierced in the breast.

Without pausing a moment to allow their consternation to subside, the two rescuers grasped their guns, and with loud yells rushed upon the survivors.

Utterly taken by surprise, the Narragansetts did not pause for any defense, but fled from the spot with all speed. Most of their weapons were left behind, so that they were in no condition for resistance, even had they felt so inclined. The rescuers, therefore, contented themselves with discharging their pieces after them, which proceeding tumbled one more of their number upon the ground.

Archibald then drew his knife and rushed to the flaming pile, where the unknown stood calmly leaning against the tree. Though the flames were getting uncomfortably stifling, he betrayed no emotion, but watched the proceedings of his deliverers in the calmest manner possible.

Only when the cords which confined him were severed, he kicked away the blazing faggots, and remarked as he stepped forth :

“ Well and splendidly done, young man ! You should make arms your profession. Believe me, you would become a splendid strategist, and a daring fighter ! ”

The youth was utterly embarrassed. He stood again in the presence of that strange man—stranger now than ever before. But he felt that something must be said, and quite confusedly he responded :

“ I know not, sir, what I might become in Europe, where every thing is reduced to a matter of science and study. But here no amount of military education can fit a man for a conflict with these red devils.”

“ Partly right and partly wrong, my young friend. A military education, among other things, inures a man to

danger, and teaches him coolness and self-possession at all times. Those qualities are, perhaps, more essential in this warfare, than all others, excepting skill in the use of weapons."

"Indeed, sir, you seem to have canvassed the entire field of military science, even up to Indian fighting," said Archibald, anxious to draw out the stranger.

The latter looked searchingly at him before replying.

"Yes, I *have* seen something of military life, in years past. I have witnessed battles such as you little dream of. My experience,"—he paused—"has been a strange one."

"Will you not tell me something of it?" Archibald asked, though he repented the question in a moment.

"Not now, my friend, not now. Sooner or later it may be your fortune to know more of me. But stay," he added suddenly. "What do your people of Hadley say I am?"

"Generally speaking, they consider you a messenger sent from God, for their especial preservation," was the rather hesitating reply.

"Then let that suffice for the present. I shall feel flattered, and it is quite as well."

"But, I know you to be flesh and blood," said the youth, who had grasped one of the unknown's arms, thus satisfying himself of the fact.

"And you can reveal your knowledge to the Hadleyites, and be laughed to scorn!" said the other, carelessly.

They resumed the route toward Hadley, traveling in silence, and keeping a sharp watch for every lurking savage. But, none crossed their path, and, in less than an hour, the shadow of evening had descended so densely that a native would scarcely have been discovered ten yards away.

"We shall have to stop now, and wait for the morn," remarked Archibald, as they scrambled through a section of bushy forest.

"Yes, and the sooner the better," returned the stranger. "I am well worn with this rough mode of travel."

Seeking out a convenient place, they were soon seated upon the ground. Here Archibald and Christian shared their not over-abundant allowance of food with the stranger. None of them felt disposed to converse, had talking been allowed under the circumstances, and the unknown composed himself

upon the earth, and slept. The others followed his example, and soon no sound, save the heavy breathing of the sleepers, was heard.

The faint streaks of early dawn had begun to penetrate the forest, when the sleepers awoke.

"Where is our companion?" asked Archibald, who looked in vain for the third person. "Surely he was here, and this is where he was lying."

But no stranger was there now. They waited in the vicinity nearly an hour, trusting he might return, and scoured the neighboring forests to find some traces of him. All to no purpose. If their yesterday's experience had been a reality, he had now vanished like a shadow.

Filled with wonder, surprise, and foreboding, they took their way to Hadley, which they reached about noon.

There the strange story they related was variously received, though the majority of persons considered the appearance and disappearance of the unknown as most special proof of his supernatural nature. Even Archibald, strong as had been his faith, began to feel doubts as to the real nature of his late companion.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE WILDS.

ANOTHER week passed without fresh adventure. June had almost flown, and though great fears had at one time been entertained of a second visit from the Indians, they had not thus far shown their faces again.

As is generally the case, present safety brought a sense of security, and little danger was now felt.

Nothing more had been seen or heard, in any reliable manner, of the mysterious man who had so signally befriended them, and who had, in turn, been assisted by Archibald Turner.

So unaccountable was his appearance and disappearance, that the belief was every day gaining ground, that he was a

being superior to mortals, or possessing supernatural powers.

Archibald Turner spent the time in ordinary labor, assisting to cultivate the neighboring fields, many of which were worked in common during those troublesome times, those who assisted sharing in the produce.

The fields being hoed, the young man shouldered his rifle again, and started into the forest. He had no particular object in view, but longed to tramp the wilderness once more—to encounter its perils and enjoy its adventures—so fascinating had the forests become to him.

It was early morning when he set out. The dew was still sparkling on the grass about Hadley, and many a glad songster was piping his welcome to the new-fledged day. Yet Archibald wandered forth with little eye for any of the beauties spread about, and quite heedless of the sweet voices which chirped with such glee from the tree-tops. His thoughts were far away, even to the Mohegan village. In fact, he was wondering where the sweet maiden of the red-skins, Shining Star, might be at this moment, and what she was doing. Was she thinking of him? Possibly, and the thought was very gratifying to the young Englishman.

Archibald would not have acknowledged that he was in love with her; far from it. That he felt a deep interest in her welfare there could be no doubt. If she had a white skin, and the same attractions of grace and natural beauty, he would argue to himself, she might sway his affections, and command the homage of courtiers. Was she the less deserving because of her birth and parentage, events over which she had no control? Might it not be possible to educate her as we educate our own children, and make her a refined woman?

Debating within himself upon these matters, not for the first time, he wandered on, and entered the forest, scarcely heeding whither he went. He only knew that the forest scenery, over which his eyes wandered with a gaze which saw nothing, was familiar to him. Had he looked more intently, the young man would have seen moving figures here and there, among the trees in advance of him, and detected more than one eye which watched his progress from behind some cover with eager satisfaction. But, he saw no such thing.

He strode blindly on, with rifle strung on shoulder, and the first intimation he had of danger, came in a form not to be mistaken.

Half a dozen whooping Narragansetts sprang from behind trees, yelling and brandishing weapons, as they rushed upon the astounded scout. Archibald's day-dream was rudely broken in upon, and before he could realize his situation, or attempt a defense, he was in the hands of the savages.

To struggle was natural, and a struggle with him meant something more than child's-play. His brawny arms swept more than one enemy to the earth, held as he was, and astounded the almost victors, quite as much as their sudden onslaught had astonished him. Could he have drawn himself entirely from their grasp, it is possible Archibald might have freed himself, notwithstanding numbers and the disadvantage at which he was taken. But, this was not to be his good fortune.

The brave scout, despite his efforts, was borne down by numbers, and his arms pinioned, after all weapons, and every thing of value had been taken from him. He was then led to a tree, against which he was placed, and his arms firmly lashed thereto.

When this had been done, a warrior stepped back several paces, and hurled his hatchet, knocking off a piece of bark just above the prisoner's head. The handle of the weapon, indeed, partially struck his head, and almost blinded him for the moment. The savage then uttered an impatient exclamation, and withdrew a little further. Here he fitted an arrow to his bow, and raised it to his eye. Archibald could see that the shaft was leveled at his face, and shut his eyes with a firm resolution, expecting to feel the dreadful crash of the feathered missive.

He heard the twang of the bow, and almost simultaneously came the dull "thud" of the arrow into the tree above his head. Opening his eyes, he saw by the direction of the shaft, which still stuck quivering in the tree, that it had stuck precisely where the hatchet had. At once he realized that the brave was only testing his prisoner's nerves. But, he was fitting another arrow! How soon might he choose to close the scene; or how soon might he fail to pierce the mark,

burying the barb in Archibald's brain instead? Despite all the young man's undeniable courage, there was a sinking sensation at his heart, at each fresh trial. But, he braved them all, and when the Indians had exhausted that part of the programme, they gathered in the usual council.

But for the peculiar circumstances under which Archibald had been taken prisoner, there is not a doubt but that his life would have paid the penalty at once. As it was, however, a desire was kindled in the breasts of some of his captors to take him to their home, where their squaws and children might feast upon, and learn cruelty from his tortures.

A tall brave, who seemed the leading spirit of the party, propounded the idea, dwelling upon it with considerable savage eloquence. His eye sparkled and glowed with fiendish pleasure, as he dilated upon the scenes in store for them, in which all could share.

He pointed to the bulky frame of the prisoner, of whose prowess they had received abundant proof, and urged how fitting would be such a victim when long-continued and terrible tortures were to be applied.

His logic, coupled with the passionate revenge he painted, proved irresistible. With a simultaneous shout, his brethren acquiesced in his plan. Instant action was urged, and preparations at once made to set out upon the return to their people. To this proceeding some objection was raised, but it was quickly overruled, and with democratic unanimity the entire party moved in obedience to the voice of the majority.

The scout's bands were now cast off, saving the cord which confined his arms, and he was placed in the midst of the file, between two wicked-looking braves. Then the line of march was taken up, and rapidly pursued for many weary hours, before any pause was permitted.

Their provisions were running low, and it was rather necessary that they seek some mode of replenishing them. Archibald was treated to a far more substantial repast than any of his captors enjoyed; but he was far from suspecting the object of such unusual benevolence.

On the party traveled; it seemed to the young man that he had never walked so far and so fast during one day. The sun was sinking low behind the trees, and already it was dusky

in those forest-depths. The party had not yet halted, but were upon the point of doing so, when moving bodies were discovered in the distance. Archibald saw at once that they were Indians, and his first hope was that they might be a superior body of Mohegans. But, as they came nearer, he saw that they, too, were Narragansetts.

The party with the prisoner seemed at first ill disposed to meet the others, who were by far the most numerous; but, finally they advanced, after having conferred together upon some matters of interest. The new-comers were hideously painted and decked, for it would seem they were upon the war-path in good earnest.

The meeting between the two bodies was not friendly. The chief of the larger party, a hideously disfigured and bedecked brute in human shape, strode forward, and addressed some harsh-sounding gutturals to the tall brave who had argued so effectively for the retention of the prisoner. The one addressed responded by pointing to the white man, and repeating some rather confused sentences, from which it appeared that his superior was displeased at his proceedings.

An interchange of sentences followed, during which the new warriors crowded around, viewing the prisoner with many exclamations of satisfaction. The chief having indulged in some very loud words, also strode up and viewed the enemy of his people. One hand was upon his hatchet, and he seemed disposed to strike down the white man where he stood. But, the tall brave ventured to make intercession, pointing earnestly to the east, and finally the chief gave a reluctant consent to his proposition, whatever it might have been.

Preparations were at once made for a night bivouac of all the Indians, and, as some game had been shot during the afternoon, they were better provided with food than at their midday resting-place. Archibald, however, did not fare so sumptuously, and he noticed a marked difference in the manner of the savages toward him.

Soon after their supper was eaten, the braves threw themselves upon the ground, and relapsed into slumber, but Archibald lay with open eyes, reflecting upon what had transpired during the day. What gave him the most concern, was their

meeting with the fresh party, which evidently was bent upon mischief. Naturally they would wish the smaller party to join them, in which case he would stand in the way of their so doing. He knew very well that, if any thing stood in their way it would be rudely set aside. And that gave him a key to the movements of the two Indian leaders. One wished to dispatch him at once, while the other had persuaded him to wait till morning light, so that all could join in the revelry.

The more the prisoner reasoned, the more he became satisfied that such was the true interpretation of what had passed, and the more anxious did he become to decide upon some plan for foiling their desires.

For a long time he lay reflecting and planning. The Indians had encamped in an open piece of forest, near to where a spring bubbled forth beneath a large rock. The ground all about them was level and free from underbrush, so that any attempt at escape he might make would stand little chance of success. In addition, two guards had been posted, one of them apparently for his especial benefit. The latter savage remained in the vicinity of the captive, while his companion in watchfulness took his station upon the outskirts of the camp.

Archibald, though realizing full well that he must escape that very night if he would save his life, could but confess that his prospects for so doing were growing smaller as the night sped away.

It was past midnight; the Indian camp was buried in profound slumber. Even the guards seemed dissatisfied with their lot, and leaned listlessly against the nearest trees, only half regardful of their duty. Hope began to dawn again in the bosom of the captive. Might he not possibly creep away after all?

He made a slight movement to test the watchfulness of those about him. It seemed unheeded, and he was encouraged to additional exertion. The next time he moved his body several inches toward the forest. The slight sounds which accompanied the exertion called one of the Indians to his side.

But the sentinel only found his charge locked in the deepest

sleep, to all appearance. He retired a short distance, throwing himself upon the ground. For an hour Archibald watched him, and at the end of that time became convinced that the brave really slept. Now was his time if any thing was to be done before daylight. It was quite dark—so dark that one unaccustomed to the gloom, could not at once have distinguished even the trees which surrounded them. But the captive had been schooling his eyes, and could see quite enough for his purpose. He would have given much could he have been allowed the use of his hands for a few moments, but they were so securely bound as to defy all efforts at release.

Very carefully, therefore, he set about leaving the unpleasant vicinity. He dared not rise and attempt to walk any, but contented himself with creeping as best he could upon one side until he had left the circle of his foes, and gained the margin of the forest. This much required some time in the accomplishment, but it was done at length, and Archibald ventured to rise to his feet. How his heart thrilled! How terrible seemed the fate from which he was endeavoring to flee!

He had scarcely regained his feet—had not, in fact, taken one step forward—when he heard a movement behind him, and, glancing back, realized that his absence had been discovered. It would not do to return now or endeavor to disarm suspicion by any false acting. Morning was drawing near, and before another opportunity would present, it would be forever too late.

Disregarding the instant tumult which followed, he strode as rapidly and noiselessly as possible into the forest. But the distance he had gained was too slight to admit of successfully avoiding a score and a half of bloodthirsty pursuers. The sound of his footsteps was heard, and the cry raised. Instantly the entire gang darted in pursuit.

Archibald had one advantage, however. He could see quite well what lay before him, while the savages, just awakened from deep slumber, were necessarily more or less confused, and ran against trees and every kind of impediment.

But to offset this slight advantage, the fugitive's hands were

bound, and the loss of their office greatly retarded his movements.

Every moment he became aware that they were gaining upon him. Of course, as they became accustomed to the darkness, the little advantage he had enjoyed would be lost.

He would have turned aside, but they were too close. He could make no movement to blind them without falling into their hands at once. The only possible course open to him was direct flight, and that could not last long. Already he could hear the panting breath of the nearest pursuer. Hope was fading away in the young man's breast. He could almost feel the weapons of his pursuers, who would cut him down without any mercy, as he was well satisfied.

Suddenly the earth seemed to open before him, for he trod on air, then shot like an arrow down into the abyss at his feet. Instinctively and instantly he threw forward his tied hands, and was arrested in his downward course with a stunning shock. His coupled hands had passed over the top of a projecting pine, which swayed tremulously under his weight. The young man realized his situation at once, and by clasping the body of the tree with his legs found himself momentarily safe. But what a peril confronted him! He was familiar with the spot—a sheer precipice of over a hundred feet in height, with the rocky bed of a dried-up stream at its base.

Scarcely had he come to this rude halt, when he heard above him the steps of his nearest pursuer. A moment more and the Indian had shot past him. There was an instantaneous cessation of footfalls, a loud yell of horror, and then a heavy fall, far below! In a moment came another and another, until three of the blindly pursuing savages had plunged into the abyss.

But the warning cries which they gave arrested their companions who were further in the rear, and who at once realized the dreadful fate of their predecessors. Not doubting that the fugitive had shared the same fate, they hastened around by a circuitous path, to search for his dead and mangled body upon the rocks beneath.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CLIFF CHAMBER.

ERE long the young man heard sounds far below him which indicated the presence of the savage horde looking for his body. The howl of rage and anguish which accompanied their search, revealed the moment when the mangled bodies of their comrades were stumbled upon in the darkness. Their voices were heard up and down the gorge as they signaled one another. Now was the time for escape, if, indeed, escape from that perilous position were possible. The scout's idea was to try and recover the crest of the chasm, and, in the darkness, to elude pursuit. But no movement was possible so long as his wrist remained clasped by the thongs, and yet, to remove the thongs was no easy task in that constrained and most painful position. Drawing the body up to where his locked arms were held by the friendly pine, Archibald proceeded to gnaw at the leather string, and, in a few minutes, had so far succeeded as to feel his wrists parting. At the same moment he heard the sound of voices above and near him, and he clung more closely to the little tree which was now his ark of safety. Three or four savages, failing to find his body below, had again come to the brink of the precipice for observation. Seeing nothing in the deep darkness they shouted to those below, and hurled down stones to indicate the spot where the body must have fallen ; but to no purpose, apparently, for soon all was silent below.

Would the Indians leave the vicinity before dawn, to give him a further chance of his life ? was now Archibald's most anxious mental inquiry. If not, his case was hopeless indeed. For another half-hour he awaited, his hands now wholly free, but painfully swollen and lacerated by rough usage. With much effort and care he dropped down the body of the tree to strike the bank from which it grew. He found it to be a tall, slender pine, whose roots were many feet below the crest of the chasm. It must, therefore, spring from a shelf of rock.

If so, was there not some hope of escape by it? He resolved to explore the chances for dropping down, with safety, to the gully below. Once there, he knew it would be easy, with his knowledge of the locality, to elude his hunters.

Down the slender body of the tree he glided, until, at length, he stood upon solid ground. A few moments examination proved his guess correct—the pine grew from a shelf on the face of the almost perpendicular wall, springing out of the wall at a point where a growth of bushes indicated the existence of a foothold for soil. A stone loosened in his efforts at exploration, went crashing down, sending up echoes from the gulf underneath, to warn him that the base of the cliff was yet far beneath him. It did more, for a shout followed from below which was answered by a responsive shout from above:—the Narragansetts were still there; and as the faintest streaks of dawn now began to shimmer in the air overhead, the hunted man realized that it was full time for him to find a spot of retreat in the face of the wall, which the prying eyes of the savages could not penetrate.

Continuing the search carefully along the thin shelf, he found it to narrow and end abruptly, but a few feet along the wall, arrested by a huge buttress of rock. Several indentations, however, were found along the path, which offered ample shelter from observation, and safety from rifle-ball or arrow, and, choosing the most ample of these, near the rocky buttress, the wearied man leaned against the damp wall and was soon fast asleep.

He could have slept but an hour, for, startled by the *thud* of a heavy stone almost at his feet, he unclosed his eyes to find the sun just rising over the hills and flooding the precipice with light. What had loosened that stone? Evidently it came from above, and *some person* must have sent it down. Was he discovered? He feared so: yet, having a good place of defense, determined to preserve it. A slight noise from overhead now arrested his attention. Stones continued to fall, and he distinctly heard the sound of voices. The temptation to look out and to peer up was irresistible. Extending his head from cover, he had scarcely exposed it ere a shot was fired from below, the ball striking the rock at his side. It was a narrow escape.

But he had seen enough to repay the risk. A young savage was suspended in the air, not ten feet above, endeavoring to reach the ledge by a rope of thongs. Archibald's resolve was instantly made to grapple the foe, and hurl him from the shelf. Crouching down close in his little cave, he was somewhat surprised to perceive a fissure in the wall at his back, which darkness hitherto had hidden. It was large enough to admit his body, but should he use it? If penned up there the Indian would have easy work in dispatching him, so he crouched still lower; and the swaying body of the Narragansett now half appeared before the hidden chamber. The scout now perceived that the savage held on to the rope by his hands, which, therefore, could not be disengaged until the Indian's feet touched the shelf. In his girdle stuck his knife and tomahawk. It was evident, at a glance, that the young brave was lacking in the caution of experience, or he never would have made that descent, with his weapons in his belt, and his hands fully employed in sustaining his own weight. A pang of pity smote the young white's bosom. To kill one so young seemed inhuman, indeed. To refrain from killing him might be to doubly peril his own life.

He had no time for mental debate. The young brave's feet neared the shelf. Rising from his crouching attitude, as the Indian's neck came into view, Archibald seized the throat in his vice-like grasp, and drew the writhing body into the little chamber. So rapid and still was the movement, that those above and below never suspected what had happened. The thong swung loosely over the shelf, as if the brave had reached his goal in safety.

His safety was in the repose of death; for, ere the white man's grasp was released, life was extinct.

"Ah me, this is too horrible—to kill one so young; yet it must be, where my own safety is in the balance," Archibald said to himself, as he proceeded to relieve the body of the beautiful new knife and tomahawk—evidently never yet stained with a white man's blood. "What must be the Narragansett's thirst for slaughter when such young braves as this are permitted to take the war-path!" thought the scout. Taking the body, Archibald proposed to crowd it in the fissure, when, to his astonishment, he found it to lead to an

inner chamber, quite in the depths of the hill. He was bearing the body in, when the further falling of loosened stones, on the shelf without, gave warning of further danger. Now armed with a keen knife, he had no fears of any hand-to-hand encounter, and turned back through the fissure to behold a powerful savage already standing before it, having slid down from above with the agility of a cat. The Narragansett had caught sight of his antagonist first, and, with a wild war-whoop, bounded into the narrow entrance of the cavern. Archibald could not fall back before the sudden onslaught, pressed closely by the savage, whose stalwart form so filled the passage as to darken the chamber. This gave the white the momentary advantage of taking a proper position for defense; and as the Indian emerged in the room, he found the white man ready for him. Standing between his antagonist and the light, the Narragansett was taken at a great disadvantage; but, beholding at his feet the dead body of the young brave, the warrior gave another fierce whoop, and bounded upon Archibald like a thunderbolt. With a swing of his arm the white man dashed aside the blow at his heart, and the knife flew from the Indian's grasp quite across the room, as the two men closed in a death-gripe. The Narragansett thought to crush the pale-face by the sheer force of tremendous strength, but he found a man in his embrace whose power was quite equal to his own, and by an expert movement of the foot the young scout tripped the giant, pressed him backward and fell upon him with the whole weight of his body. Ere the savage had struck the rough stone floor, however, the bright steel of that untarnished blade, drawn from the young Indian's belt, was crimsoned to the hilt in the blood of the big warrior.

Withdrawing from the savage's embrace, Archibald sprung to the entrance, expecting to confront other Indians, who, he felt certain, would follow their comrades down to the shelf. Nor was he mistaken; for he emerged from the inner room just in time to behold the body of an Indian shoot past through the air, as if, having lost his hold upon the rope, he had been precipitated into the chasm below. Down, like a rocket, the painted and feather-bedecked warrior dropped, and a wild howl from the base of the cliff told his fate.

Looking upward, Archibald beheld the secret of the sudden descent in the remnant of the deerskin rope which dangled far above, while upon the shelf at his feet lay fully fifteen feet of the parted strand.

Thus relieved from the danger of further immediate visitation, the young man scrutinized the cavern. A pitiful and memorable sight met his eyes. Sitting upright against the wall was the big warrior, holding in his arms the body of the young brave, gazing intently into the glassy eyes, while a low moan, like the sighing of winds through the forest, broke from his lips. The full light of the sun through the rift lit up the faces of the dying and the dead, and Archibald readily discovered, in the touching group, father and son—so much alike did they look when the sign of Death lay upon their foreheads. The moan soon changed to a wail, so wild and so filled with the pathos of grief as to cause tears to stream from the eyes of the solitary spectator. Oh, how he yearned, then, to bind up that ghastly wound, and to restore father and son again to the lodge whose door they never more would darken!

That more than human wail died away, and then there arose the solemn death-chant—the warrior still clasping his boy; but it suddenly ceased; the singer's head fell forward on his breast; the warrior was no more; he was alone with the dead.

What should now be done? To emerge from his cave and expose his person was to incur great hazard from the now excited savages—three more of whose number had now perished in their hunt after the white. That they would endeavor to gain the retreat in such combined numbers as would overwhelm him, he clearly foresaw. Escape was imperative then, if he would be saved a most horrible death. But how to elude the lynx-eyed foe? was a question beyond his power to answer; and he could only hope that the Providence who had guided him thus far would still direct his steps to safety.

Fearing an assault from the plateau, he proceeded so to bar the narrow entrance with stones as to give him all the advantage in event of an attack. This done, he began to explore the chamber more fully, hoping to discover an opening, which would again bring him out on the face of the cliff,

along which he might crawl, unobserved, to the gulf below, or to the crest above—a most dangerous and weary task, he knew, but one which must be attempted. His search revealed several blind passages, but so filled were they with the fallen and wet *débris* of the walls as to render passage seemingly impossible. Selecting one which appeared to strike in the right direction, he at once began to remove the lower stones—an operation greatly facilitated by the large, heavy knife which the warrior had wielded. In a few moments his eyes were gladdened by the sight of light some distance ahead, and after a half-hour's diligent labor he found himself again commanding a full view of the gulf below. But, it was apparent that the scene was changed; he had left the first entrance so far behind as to have passed the rocky buttress which had brought the plateau to such an abrupt termination; and he could now see the great rock jutting its smooth face far out from the perpendicular wall, as if to screen him from the sight of the basilisk eyes watching for him beyond. He took new courage, and began to examine the ground below him with reference to a descent to the old stream bed.

Twenty feet below a rock jutted out from the face of the cliff, offering secure footing. From thence a line of bushes led away along the cliff, showing a second plateau or shelf to exist. To reach this rock, however, seemed impossible—the descent from his look-out was direct and unbroken, with not a chance for a foothold. Pondering sadly over the seemingly hopeless task, a smile all at once mantled his face, and he began quickly to crawl backward through his narrow rift. Gaining the cave, he did not pause, but scaling his barrier erected in the entrance-way, he found himself once more on the plateau. There, upon its extreme verge, full in view of those above and below, lay the rope of thongs, which had hurried the descending savage to his doom. To rush toward, secure it, and beat a retreat, was the accomplished work of a moment; but not too quick were his movements for two shots, one from below and one from above, cut closely enough to his face to prove how ceaseless was the vigilance of the foe.

“Ha, ha! Narragansett,” he audibly muttered, “it’s there you are! And there may you stay for the next hour—then you may walk in and take possession of this camping-ground.”

A thought occurred to him. Stripping off his hunting-shirt, he so arranged it against the wall as to be just visible from above, indicating his continued presence there. This done, he retraced his way to his avenue of escape. The rope was made fast without delay, and with the rapidity of one knowing the value of moments, he slid down the slender but strong line. It reached to within six or eight feet of the rock, and to drop that distance was easy and safe enough, if his weight did not dislodge the rock from its bed. Down he bounded, however, and with safety, for the rock was firm. Instantly gliding to the cover of the bushes stretching away along the cliff, he found a second shelf, as he had surmised. This he followed, bearing him away, as it did, further from the scene of his terrible danger. Gradually a thicket of evergreens began to creep up the cliff, proving the declivity to be near its end; and, in a few moments more, the young scout was safe in the rocky bed. This he crossed; and, striking out into the forest and hills beyond, was soon loping off through the woods at a pace which, before high noon, had placed miles between himself and the fierce warriors who thirsted for his blood. Toward the Mohegan lodges he bent his course, hoping to find rest with his red friends ere the night should again close over him.

Had he no other purpose in seeking the village than rest for his weary, aching limbs?

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOHEGAN VILLAGE.

High noon passed, and still he pursued his cautious course. Danger, he only too well realized, lurked in unexpected places, and his eagerness to reach the village of the Mohegans did not betray him into forgetfulness of a scout's sagacity. Though fatigued, and sore and hungry almost to an unbearable degree, Archibald persevered with a will which must have been sustained by a sweet hope of rest to come.

Nor was he disappointed; for, just at sunset, he became aware of the vicinity of the Mohegan village, by meeting with its scouts, who were abroad to guard against predatory movements of the Narragansetts, and to them he related his story. The Mohegans greeted him cordially.

As they neared the village a little cry of delight broke upon the young man's ears, and looking in the direction whence it came he observed the Indian maiden who filled so many of his thoughts, waking and sleeping, skipping gayly along toward him. This was a glad sight, yet one which he had dreaded. He had feared that a sojourn among her own people might, in some manner, detract from the natural grace and beauty she had seemed to possess while in the home of the white man.

Might he not, after all, find her miserable and degraded? Such an awakening would be very painful, but he had almost feared that it would take place.

But now, like the glad sun, bursting through dark clouds, the maiden appeared, and her presence dispelled all his fears. There she came, beautiful, graceful, buoyant as ever! A world of anxiety was lifted from the young man's heart, and he could not refrain from rushing to meet her; though he scarcely dared bestow the kiss he longed to imprint upon her cherry lips.

"Welcome, good white man; welcome!" the maiden exclaimed, ardently grasping both of his outstretched hands in her own. "Me glad you come again!"

"Are you?" and he looked as if her pleasure was a satisfaction to him. "Well, I'm glad to see you, and glad to get here to your town. I've had a rough time with the Narragansetts!"

The maiden's expression changed, instantly, and she bent forward with intense interest, as she asked in a low, anxious voice,

"You didn't get hurt, me hope?"

"Not severely," he replied.

The Indians who had been escorting Archibald now left him to the care of the maiden, while they returned to their duties. The young people did not at once hasten to the town, but as they loitered by the way Archibald informed the

maiden how he had fallen into the power of the Narragansetts, and how strangely all things had worked together for his escape.

The maiden had not, meanwhile, relaxed her grasp upon his hand, and as he declared his ostensible errand, she drew him toward the home of her people, saying,

"Good! Now you come with me. Me find you home. You find me home when Nar'gansett catch me!"

There was something so gratified in the tone that there would have been no resisting the appeal, even had Archibald felt disposed to do so, which he certainly did not.

He found the wigwam over which the maiden presided in much better condition than when he had left there a week before. Every thing bore a cheerful look, and seemed as cozy as could be expected in the midst of a fortified Indian town. Really palatable food was at once placed before him, and after eating his fill, and conversing with such Mohegans as came in to see him, Archibald threw himself upon a pile of skins, and slept the sleep of complete exhaustion—never once waking through all the hours of the night.

He awoke to find the sweet face beside him which had filled his dreams. Shining Star was engaged upon some bead-work, but threw it aside when she saw that the white man was awake.

"How you feel now?" she asked in tones exquisitely sweet to the young man's ears.

"Much better," he replied, rising to his feet. "I shall have no trouble in setting out for my home this morning."

"Not so soon!" said the Indian, in a voice so sad that Archibald really wondered if he might not just as well stay another day.

The result was what might have been readily foreseen. The entire day passed most pleasantly in the society of the dusky maiden and her friends. Indeed, the twain conducted themselves very much as an accepted pair of white lovers would have done under similar circumstances. They walked and talked together, and sat in romantic spots beneath wide-spreading forest trees, saying very little, except what the eyes might speak in silent language. All the while Archibald realized that he ought to return, and assure his friends of his

welfare; but at the same time he reflected that they would not be *very* much alarmed, while he was not ready to return. He would certainly set out early next morning. Day closed, and twilight settled into the blackness of night. Still he lingered, fascinated, spell-bound. In fact, when he retired for the second night his purpose of returning early the next morning was growing weaker.

Next morning he awoke and looked forth. There were indications of a rain-storm not far distant, and he was not desirous of setting forth till that was decided. While he was watching the workings of nature, all other considerations were drowned by a warning of danger, which was brought to the town by one of the Mohegan scouts.

That individual had been out in the forest a mile distant, when the early gray of morning light dawned. Sundry movements in the vicinity had warned him that he was not alone, and a little investigation revealed the fact that a body of Narragansetts were stealing along in the direction of the Mohegan town. The scout who made this discovery was very fleet of foot, and without a moment's pause he bounded away, bringing the first tidings of the foe already at the door.

The Indians flew to arms with a readiness which long practice had rendered second nature to them, and within two minutes after the arrival of the message the rude fortifications were swarming with defenders. They were not a moment too soon, however.

Scarcely had the foremost settled themselves in their positions, when a band of the enemy appeared, and with loud yells rushed upon the least defensive portion of the breastworks. In fire-arms the Mohegans had a superiority, as they had been well supplied by their English friends, and the volley they gave the Narragansetts as they approached drove them speedily back to the shelter of the forest.

As it was evident that they could not effect a surprise, the assaulting party, who were slightly nonplussed at the greeting, put their heads together to counsel how the desired object should be effected; while a portion of their warriors amused the Mohegans by a series of feigned attacks. But the defenders were brave men, and by this time they were fully

in the defenses, so that the few shots exchanged were generally in their favor.

Archibald, feeling that he owed a debt of gratitude to the Mohegans, had taken a gun, and was among the first to greet the assaulting party. The Indians had scarcely looked for this decided act upon the part of their guest, and when he improved the calm which followed in walking about the town, and giving various good suggestions for the defense, they began to regard him as especially sent by the Great Spirit to protect their people from the common foe.

But the Narragansetts, confident in the superiority which numbers gave, had no intention of relinquishing the attack. Safe beyond rifle-shot, their leaders pleaded and urged till the braves were wrought up to something like a frenzy, and were eager to be led upon the town once more.

Soon a body of them burst from the forest covert, and advanced a short distance with wild yells. Here they paused, firing several futile shots from such weapons as they possessed, evidently in the hope of drawing a reply from the defenders before they should be sufficiently near to suffer severely. But Archibald had warned them against any such rashness, knowing that a close volley, steadily given, would not fail to send the assaulting party back again in confusion. The Mohegans behaved unusually well, for they had much faith in the general sagacity of the whites, and Archibald was everywhere present among them.

The Narragansetts, finding that the attempt did not succeed, withdrew, and rushed forth again next moment, with fresh yells and an evident purpose of at once attacking the town. But, they stopped a pace further in advance than before, and the same pantomime was repeated. This was really dull work, but as it was uncertain at what moment the savage force would make another forward movement, the defenders had but to wait in silence and watch the progress of events.

Suddenly there came a cry of alarm, and a victorious yell from the other side of the town. The main body of the Indians, taking advantage of the feint made by their brothers, had stolen around to that quarter, and rushed upon the defenders before their presence was really understood. The few

who were upon the watch in that direction, being utterly unable to combat them, called loudly for assistance, and in obedience to their request most of those with Archibald rushed that way. The young man would have followed, but, at that instant, he saw another movement which required to be met. Those Narragansetts in front of them, seeing the general rush of the defenders to oppose their brethren, set themselves in motion toward the palisades at a quick rate.

Here was a case requiring prompt action. Archibald was almost alone, and at least a score of foes were coming. Should they gain the town it would be a decisive ease with the Mohegans. Hastily calling to such of the latter as he could see, the young man discharged his own weapon with such good aim that one of the foremost fell in his tracks. He had no time to reload, and instead of attempting it he hastened for assistance. Three or four Indians were skulking behind a lodge, waiting an opportunity to join the general melee without much danger to themselves, and these he commanded to assist him.

With this little reënforcement he returned just as the assaulting party was at hand, and his few allies were upon the point of flying. Seeing the addition to their number, the latter paused, and turned upon the enemy. A sharp conflict at once ensued.

Archibald clubbed his musket and planted himself in the way of the half-victorious Narragansetts, while his red companions gallantly seconded his efforts. Half a dozen of the most agile savages gained the enclosure, but it was to meet a certain doom. Archibald's own arm swept down two of them, and his comrades as speedily disposed of the balance. The others, meanwhile, finding that they could not readily gain an entrance there, ran to join their confederates upon the other side of the position.

Having disposed of those who had entered, nothing now remained but to follow and meet the balance of the party wherever they should chance to make a second attempt.

The Narragansetts did not proceed more than half-way to their fellows, before they found a spot where the defences seemed to be utterly at their mercy. Three or four of them at once bounded over, and the balance prepared to follow

But scarcely had the foremost gained the enclosure, when they were swept upon by the victorious and maddened Mohegans. Almost in a moment the conflict which ensued was decided, but not so cheaply was victory bought as before.

Archibald led the advance of his party, and upon gaining the scene he raised his clubbed musket to strike down one of those opposing him. But the blow for which his arm was nerved, was never given. Darkness overspread his vision, and with a movement over which he had no power, the young man fell to the earth. A hatchet had been hurled, and struck him upon the head, cutting an ugly gash. One of his companions fell a moment later, with an arrow in his breast, and two of the Narragansetts dropped beside their victims. The balance succeeded in escaping, and very soon the whole attacking force withdrew.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAMB AND THE WOLF.

Not until near noon did the Narragansetts give over the attack, and allow the Mohegans a short respite. But, as they finally withdrew, and scouts followed to bring word in case they should change their purpose, the besieged were left at liberty once more. Most of their wounded, not many in number, had already been cared for, and now the dead were to be gathered and consigned to the grave with due Indian lamentations and wailings.

Archibald had been very severely stunned by the blow which prostrated him, and several hours passed before consciousness returned. The first sensations he was conscious of were a violent pain in the head, with raging thirst. His whole body seemed paralyzed. But when he was able in some measure to understand his condition, he saw that the sensation was produced by a heavy form lying directly across him. The pressure, coupled with his other sufferings, was almost unbearable, but he was quite unable to help himself,

and, after a few futile efforts which aggravated the pains he already endured, the sufferer desisted, looking anxiously for any passer-by to whom he might call for assistance.

The place where he had fallen was the least frequented of any portion of the enclosure, and it seemed now that no kindly helper would ever again pass that way. He would have called for assistance, but could not.

Of one thing he was tolerably certain; the town still remained in the hands of the Mohicans, and the fighting had ceased, for not a single murmur had he heard in all the long time he had been there so anxiously waiting. Probably the time was not so very long, in reality, since each moment of pain and suspense seems in itself an age.

Finally the young man's heart beat again, more relieved, as he heard steps, and saw a single Indian approaching. Now he should find relief! The Mohican was passing by at a little distance, scarcely regarding the pile of dead bodies beside him, when Archibald called his attention in that direction.

"Help me!" he said, seeing that the other would pass by.

The Indian paused, as the faint tone reached his ears, and turned in the direction whence he came. He stopped on seeing the white man with his strange load, and stood regarding him for some time in silence.

"Move this body, so that I can breathe," said Turner, thinking that he was not comprehended.

The Indian glanced quickly around, and then moved up nearer to the fallen white man, dropping upon one knee as he did so. One hand rested upon a knife in his belt, and a baleful light shone in his glittering eye.

For a moment Archibald was somewhat frightened, thinking a disguised Narragansett had gained the town, and was about to kill him. But a second look gave evidence that he was mistaken, for the person before him was a Mohican whom he recollects often to have seen about the town. And another fact he recollects: that the same Indian had always seemed to regard him with peculiar feelings, whether of jealousy or hatred he could not say. But he had no idea that the savage would take advantage of his present helpless state. The Indian was just within reach of the white man,

and here he paused for some time, regarding the wound and appearance of the latter closely. The scowl upon his features grew darker, meanwhile, and at length he whipped forth the knife upon which his hand had constantly rested. But he did not look at the white man while so doing. Carefully glancing about, to make sure that no one was observing him, he bent forward, raised the knife, and would have plunged it into the breast of the man who had fought so gallantly for his people.

But it was not to be. Another eye had observed the movement, and a keen voice came to bid the wretched traitor desist. It was the voice of death, borne upon an arrow, which pierced the reprobate's back. He reeled, rose to his feet, moaned once or twice, and then sank beside his intended victim.

As he did so another character appeared upon the scene.

The new-comer was Shining Star, who, with a bow in her hands, advanced to the wounded man, and knelt beside him.

"Oh, that good!" she said, with energy. "Me come little while ago, and me think you dead. Then me go back and fight Nar'gam'ett with this—" indicating her bow. "Now me come ag'in, and find you 'live. Great Spirit is good!"

"So he is," murmured Archibald, in low tones. "But what of this man? Did you shoot him? And why was he thus an enemy to me?"

Shining Star seemed puzzled for a moment to gather the force of all the questions asked her, but she replied, after a momentary silence,

"Yes, me shoot him. He bad Mohegan. He want to kill you many time. He bad Mohegan. Me glad me kill him."

"But what did he want to hurt me for?" pursued Archibald, to whom the mystery of his late adventure surpassed even the pain of his situation.

The maiden bent her head for a moment, and in the confusion apparent in her pretty features, the young man read the answer to his words. After a time she said, evasively,

"Me don't know all—"

"Never mind," replied Archibald, and continuing, "Find some one who will help move this body, for it distresses me very much."

Shining Star turned to call the desired assistance, but she had no need to seek far, for several Indians were approaching the place, and when they saw the situation of their white friend, every hand was given to his assistance. Quite tenderly he was raised and conveyed to the wigwam of Shining Star. An old medicine-woman came in and dressed his wound, after which he was left to the care of the proud and happy maiden. It is hardly necessary to say that her ministrations were refreshing to the happy patient. Once or twice he thought, What if he should die there? but this pang was driven away by the strong determination to recover at all hazards; and, as he did not deem his wound very serious, he did not think recovery would be a matter of much time.

He dropped into a gentle sleep, and while that lasted, the fair watcher maintained her position beside his couch, for she knew how important it was that he should not be disturbed, if the symptoms evinced were favorable. Of this she soon felt confident, and then the expression of anxiety gave way to a glow of satisfaction.

It was almost evening when Archibald awoke. He felt at once that all was well with him. The pain in his head had abated in a great measure, and the fever had left his system. Still he was weak and sore. Even thought was painful to him, and he relapsed again into a listless, dreamy state of semi-consciousness. Shining Star was still beside him, all other duties being disregarded that she might attend upon the noble white man, to whom her heart was drawn with so strong an influence.

Archibald remarked this fact, and realized how pure a thing was devotion in the breast of that unsophisticated child of the forest. True, the casual observer might fancy that gratitude swayed her actions, but he knew that it was not that feeling alone which prompted the Indian maiden. That there was a deeper and holier passion at work no argument was needed to convince the young man.

And how did he feel under that consciousness? Archibald Turner was not one who would regard lightly the violation of any one, loving so intensely as he knew Shining Star loved him. Taking the other consideration, that the presence of the Mohegan maiden was essential to his complete

happiness, it is not difficult to determine what his purpose was.

No, he would not cast off the love of the red daughter of the forest; he would not tear his heart-strings asunder for any considerations of worldly pride. He felt that the maiden was worthy of him, and he resolved to make her his own, sooner or later. When or how this consummation was to be reached he could not yet decide. That was not material. He would await the progress of events, seizing the opportune moment when it should arrive.

From such dreams the young man was aroused by the entrance of two Indian braves, and a person of prominent rank in the town. The latter pointed to the maiden, who had risen in evident alarm upon their entrance, and the two minions at once seized her. Despite her remonstrances and appeals to the state of her charge, she was dragged away, without a moment for preparation, and with no explanation.

Of course Archibald was shocked as well as alarmed at this movement. What it could mean he was not able to determine, but he felt sure that the maiden was in danger. At once his thoughts reverted to the scene in which she had saved his life from the knife of a secret foe, and he wondered if she were not to be tried for that vindication of her love and honor. In that case, no harm could come to her, and he rather rested in ease, while certain that they only desired to investigate the matter in due form.

It was not till long after darkness had settled over the interior of the wigwam, that the absent one returned. She was still attended by two warriors, and the watcher's heart misgave him, as she moved to a distant part of the wigwam and seated herself in utter silence. The warriors also took up their stations, one near her, the other close to the entrance. Not a word was spoken. One by one the other inmates of the wigwam came in, and retired to sleep without a word being spoken. What did it all mean? What terrible mystery was there connected with the absence of the maiden?

In order that it may appear more fully to the reader, let us follow her when led forth from the wigwam.

Upon gaining the open air, she was led at once toward the center of the place, where around a council fire were seated

all the dignitaries of the village. In the midst of them lay the dead body of Fox-foot, the brave who had so basely attempted the life of Archibald, and who had met a deserved fate at the hand of Shining Star.

The maiden was then placed in the midst of the circle, attended by two guards, and after a fitting silence the chief man of the town arose, and made a formal charge against her.

She was accused of wantonly slaying Fox-foot. Of course the maiden was much surprised at this grave charge, but trusted to prove her entire innocence, when the facts of the case should come to be known.

Witnesses were at once called upon to prove the facts, and from their statement it really seemed that she was not only guilty, but a traitress to her people. One, who was the principal witness, and a brother of Fox-foot, testified that his brother had been passing near the place where he had fallen, when a voice called to him, which he knew to come from some of the wounded. While he was bending over to assist the needy one, who proved to be the white man so frequently seen in their village, an arrow pierced him in the back. This the witness saw, and on looking for the cause, beheld Shining Star still poising the bow in her hands.

In addition, he testified that his brother had loved the woman most devotedly, but that she had repulsed him, and clung to the stranger, who was not of her people or blood.

Others testified to seeing her give the fatal shot, and none were strangers to the preference she had exhibited for Archibald Turner.

These facts were elicited in the most thorough manner, and then the same semi-official who had made the first charge, rose again. He was pained to see that the hand of a Mohegan maiden could be raised against her people in the hour of peril, when deadly foes were all around them. The one who could thus forget her nation, should be made an example of, and he urged that she be burned at the stake in the morning.

No one spoke till he ceased, and then the cry went from mouth to mouth, "Burn her!" Shining Star heard these fearful sounds, and knew that her doom was sealed. But no

word or sigh broke from her lips, and only did she shrink from the coming fate as youth and health must ever shrink from death. Then, too, there was the brave stranger, whom she had been battling for her people, and whose health and well-being had been her especial care. He would then be left to the uncertain care of her jealous executioners, and she shrunk from the thought that he might be driven forth at any time, or executed by a fancy of theirs.

Pained at this thought, more than at the idea of death for herself, the maiden forgot her sex and weakness, forgot all save the unjustice of her doom. Rising to her feet, she gave an earnest, truthful history of the transaction, so clear, so vivid and eloquent that many of the council began to doubt her guilt.

But all that she had said proved nothing; her word was unsupported, and when the brother of the murdered man rose, and in vehement tones denounced her for scandalizing the honor of his dead brother, who was a brave and warrior, he carried back again all the maiden's influence, and she was solemnly adjudged to death!

Then it was that she was taken back again to the wigwam, to pass the last night of her decreed life under guard. And this was the reason of the strange scene within that Indian abode.

At length all became quiet within the tent, and after some time spent in composing her feelings, the maiden arose and approached the couch where the young man was lying, followed by the stealthy guard, who maintained his position between her and escape. She had hoped to find the sufferer sleeping, and to watch beside him through the last hours of her life, but it was not so; the dark mystery going on about him had been quite sufficient to keep the young man awake. As Shining Star took a position beside him, he turned somewhat, and in a low tone asked,

"What is it? What is the meaning of all this?"

The dark-featured maiden did not reply for some moments. She had not prepared herself to reveal the cause of her sadness, and the strict watch kept over her. But now that the request was made, she had no idea of evading it, and after a short silence she said :

"Shining Star must die. Red-man say so in council, because she killed Fox Foot, bad Injun. Burn her in the morning!"

"Impossible! They can not do such a wicked thing as that!" shouted Archibald, when the first palsy of consternation had passed away. "It is infamous! I will allow nothing of the kind!"

"You can not help it," was the sad reply. "Braves hold a council, and say it must be so. Better say nothing; maybe they hurt you too."

"By heaven! I don't care for that," was the excited reply. "They shall not harm you, while I have any life in my body. But how was it that you were condemned to such a fearful fate?" he asked, a moment later.

She related to him the events which had taken place at the council, and specified those who had been most prominent in the action against her.

"I will see to that," said Archibald, rising from his couch, despite her entreaties. "I will see those men, and learn something more of this vile scheme."

He started toward the door, but gained a further insight to the state of affairs when the sentry there cocked his gun, and ordered him back to bed, intimating that he should feel called upon to blow his brains out in case of refusal. Sure that the Indians had special instructions to detain him a prisoner, he complied with the far from gracious request. Seeking the couch he had just left, the young man threw himself upon it with a force which made his wounded head snap and ring again.

"A plague on the rascally Mohegans," he muttered to himself. "They are like all other Indians, save that they are shrewder. They know it is for their interest to keep on friendly terms with the English, and so they join in alliance with us. But they are passionate and deceitful at heart, after all. Glad would they be to serve her and myself the same sauce if they but dared to do it. Never mind, they shall know my especial views in the morning. I will remind them that I do not choose to be thus buffeted after the service I have rendered them. And I do not choose to have one whom I have taken under my care thus summarily dealt with. I

will assure them that she acted a noble part, and if my efforts can not save her from that dreadful fate—”

But, really, he did not believe that they would be so rash as to carry out their purpose in regard to the maiden. Rather comforting himself with that thought, Archibald finally fell asleep, and did not awaken to realize his situation until dawn of another eventful day.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DAY OF EXECUTION.

As his mind reverted at once to the scenes surrounding him, the young man sprung upright and gazed about. The light of day had just entered the wigwam sufficiently to display all the characters there assembled, and as a consequence the inmates were generally astir. There were exceptions, however.

Mute and silent, upon a block beside the couch, sat Shining Star, her eyes fixed upon the floor, and her whole manner drooping and dejected. What wonder? Was not the light, which drove away the gloom of morning, coming as a death-signal to her? She knew the nature of her people too well to think, for a moment, that there was any respite for her. During the long hours of night she had nerved herself to meet death calmly, and now she felt that all was ready for the great change.

As Archibald's gaze rested upon her own, a faint smile for a moment broke over her features, but the sadness which gave it birth soon chased it away. The young man looked no further. He could see nothing save that pale, suffering face, and his resolution of the preceding night was renewed. He would make every possible effort in behalf of the poor maiden. Perchance he might save her from the dreadful fate, now so near its accomplishment.

Rising to his feet, he found that much of the pain and soreness had departed from his head, and he was really himself again. Putting on his cap he turned toward the door.

The same sentinel was there, and he rallied as the white man approached, presenting his musket.

"Stop!" he commanded, seeing the purpose of the other to leave the wigwam. "Stay, or me shoot!"

"Shoot!" exclaimed Archibald, with terrible earnestness, bending his fiery gaze upon the red-skin. "Threaten to shoot an Englishman, will you? and one who has done so much for you as I have done? You dare not! It would cost you the scalp of every man in this village. You are not ready to make war upon the English now, after their kindness to you."

Turner was physiognomist enough to know when he had subdued the half-formed determination on the part of the savage to oppose his exit, and at the proper moment he very quietly passed forth into the open air. The heavens were dark and lowering, giving abundant evidence of rain before many hours should pass. A mournful, sighing wind passed through the tree-tops with a howl like some weird requiem for a lost spirit. Certainly the elements and nature were in harmony with the feelings of the excited young man.

Just noticing these outward appearances, he hastened to the council square, in the midst of the village, where he found quite a number of Indians assembled. There was a little surprise evinced at his appearance, though no words denoting it were spoken. He saw at a glance that the man he sought was not there, and with trembling steps he hastened to his wigwam. Here he encountered the grave Indian who swayed most of the destinies of the village, and to him the young man at once addressed himself.

What he said, or in what terms he addressed the Mohegan, Archibald never knew. The terrible whirl of his brain was too great for any thing like candid reflection or reasoning. He merely urged upon that functionary the great injustice they were doing shining Star, and the personal interest he should be obliged to take in the matter, as he should never rest till it had been brought before the consideration of the English authorities.

The grave Indian heard him in silence, while not a muscle of his face moved. Finally, when the young man had no more to say, the other waved his hand, and in accents of command said,

"Good! My white brother may go to his wigwam now. I will speak to the council of the red-men, and if they shall heed the words of the good Yen-gee it will be well. But let the pale-face rest now, that he may be well soon."

"But let me go to the council with you!" persisted Archibald. "I can tell my own story quite as well you can, and I tell you *she* must not be harmed!"

Had he been less excited, it is more probable his request would have been heeded. But, with an all-sufficient wave of the hand the Indian dismissed him, saying,

"The council is not for white men, but for the Mohegan. Let not the stranger seek that which is not his."

Feeling that he had done and said all that was possible, and trusting for some results from that, the half-crazed young man returned again to his lodge.

He was received rather coldly by the guards, but they maintained a rigid silence, allowing the young man to act his pleasure about the wigwam. Shining Star was rather anxiously expecting him, and the quick glance she gave when he entered, scanning his countenance for any sign of hope, showed how great her faith had been in his efforts. She read his failure, and turned away with a deep sigh, which pierced the white man to the heart.

"It may be that I have effected something," he thought, "but I do not need to tell her so, and raise hopes which may only be dashed to the earth again. Better that she should be *happily* disappointed than otherwise."

The air within the cabin seemed hot and stifling; he could not breathe it. Rushing to the door he paced up and down in the open air for a time, till his equanimity was in a measure restored, and then he began to cast about him, to see in what manner he could further strive to render the doomed one assistance.

Alas! He saw no means. It could not be done by force, for he was alone in the home of the Mohegans, who, though professing friendship, might at any moment consider it for their interests to put him quietly out of their way. Strategy he could not employ, for his every movement was too closely watched. Persuasion alone remained: what a slender hope, after the experience he had already received!

"I will make one more effort!" he resolved, dashing away in the direction of the council. "If what I said effected nothing, I may still make a fruitful appeal."

He found not only the braves and leading Indians assembled, but most of the squaws and children, anxious for the hour to come when they could feast their gaze upon the frightful sufferings of a human being in agony, no matter though the sufferer be one of their own people.

The presiding genius of the village, whom Archibald had heard addressed by the euphonious *sobriquet* of Wawanooma, saw him approach, and regarded the intrusion with lowering brow. But the comer disregarded those indications of the Indian feeling, and paused not till he stood beside the dark-browed official.

"What would the pale-face in the red-man's council?" the latter demanded, seeing that an uneasy movement pervaded the ranks of the braves at this intrusion.

"I have come," was the rejoinder, "that I might satisfy myself whether the Mohegan was an honorable man, or whether he would insist upon putting to death an innocent person."

The dark brows all about him grew momentarily darker, and Wawanooma answered, in a growl like distant thunder,

"She shall die!"

"Shame upon you! Flame, Mohegans!" the young man exclaimed, with terrible earnestness, flashing back with ten-fold force the angry glances cast upon him, and forgetting for the moment his own danger, in virtuous indignation. "Is it thus you repay your allies for devotion and bravery! Chance threw me in your village, and when the foe assailed it I raised a weapon and fought with all my strength in your behalf. While I was lying wounded and helpless, a viper crept up, and would have destroyed me, had not a noble maiden from your people seen the deadly purpose, and slain him! And for that you would take her life! Shame on you, I say! When you meet the white man again it will be as foes, not friends. Your villages will be laid waste; your wigwams destroyed; your corn burned, and your young men slain! Beware how you injure one who has saved my life! I have spoken!"

He seated himself upon the ground as he ceased, after the manner of his Indian friends, and waited for the result. There was a murmur and close consultation for some moments, and when it was ended Wawanoona rose and said,

"The pale-face is strong, and speaks words of wisdom. His people are wise, and mighty in battle. But they do not rule the Mohegan. We have our own laws, and those laws decree that a murderer shall die! We have spoken!"

Approval burst from the Indians there assembled as their leader ceased speaking, and they made an impulsive movement toward the wigwam, where the object of their wrath was held a prisoner. Archibald saw that his efforts had been utterly in vain, and with a sinking heart he turned away.

His first impulse was to leave the place for ever, but a stronger feeling drew him back. He would make sure that the Indians really intended carrying out their plan before he left them. There should be no uncertainty in the matter.

He had but a few moments to wait ere the appearance of a yelling, exultant rabble showed conclusively that they had not indulged in vain or empty threatenings. Standing where he was, he soon saw the maiden led past. Already, to his eyes, she seemed crowned with the halo of martyrdom.

"Oh, my dear girl!" he moaned, "can it be that this cruel fate is for you? Can it be that I can do nothing to save you?"

He followed on in the wake of the rabble, trying to think of some scheme for her rescue. Alas! too well he knew that the thought was madness. He was alone and helpless. Not a single human being would lend him any assistance, and his own arm was far too weak for the work. He could but witness her death, and vow to heaven that the offense should not pass unheeded or unavenged.

The fatal place of execution was reached, and the maiden, more dead than alive, was securely bound to the stake. Thus far the executioners had omitted gathering any fuel, and the heart-heavy spectator really began to hope that it was only a sham, after all.

But no! From every direction came crowds of children and squaws, bearing piles of the needed fagots, which the

warriors proceeded to arrange in the most approved manner about the victim. Then the torch was produced, and with a groan the young Englishman shuddered as he closed his eyes. Hope had almost faded from his heart, when a drop of water revived it again. Yes, it was a drop of water which struck his hand, and, on turning his eyes to see whence it came, the young man saw that the long-delayed rain was upon them. The single drop was followed by another and another; then by a bursting deluge, so sudden and unexpected that the Indians broke and fled for the nearest shelter, the almost executed prisoner was hastily sent away under guard, and only the happy Archibald remained, pacing back and forth, disregarding the furious storm in his joy at the unlooked-for reprieve.

"Perhaps that may be turned to account," he mused, looking around and seeing how suddenly the throng had disappeared. "They may be made to think that some superior power has a hand in this storm. It can do no harm to sound them upon the matter."

He walked on, and soon saw Wawanooma entering his wigwam, after making sure that the prisoner was properly secured.

Archibald followed in his wake, and on reaching the cabin entered without any hesitation or ceremony. The Indian looked up with something of a frown, for he was not pleased at the aspect of affairs without. He may have had other feelings, in regard to the visitant himself, which were not utterly pleasant.

He frowned more when the intruder took a seat near him, and in most familiar tones, commenced :

"My red brother sees now that he was in the wrong, and that the Great Spirit is angry with him. Notice how his rain is sent to stay the execution which should not take place! Will not my brother confess now that he is in error?"

The expression of the red-skin's face grew more and more dark as he slowly repeated :

"If Manitou is angry with Wawanooma, let him speak and tell of his anger. Mohegan worship Christian God, and him no talk like other gods!"

"But he is talking to you now," repeated Archibald. "The

rain is his voice, and he sends it to show you that he is angry. If you do not heed that, lightnings and hurricanes may come. Let my red brother be wise!"

"Wawanooma has spoken; he will not speak double, like pale-faces. White warrior should not waste his breath in asking chief of the Mohegans to lie. I have spoken—let him go!"

There was a voice of authority in the words, accompanied as they were by a nod toward the half-open door, which convinced the listener that they were not to be disregarded without danger of invoking consequences. With the best grace possible he arose, and took his way to more hospitable quarters.

What to do now became a question of vital importance. He could do nothing more for the maiden—that was certain. He could not remain and witness her dreadful fate. Perchance he could come again and learn if it had really taken place—learn if the one whom he loved most of any on earth had been burned at the stake, only because she had dared so much to save *his* life! *Must* it be? The thought was too terrible. His brain reeled beneath the effort. Maddened and despairing, he paced up and down for a time, and then passed the fortifications unchallenged, rushing forth into the storm and forest.

For hours he wandered back and forth, keeping within sight of the Mohegan village, till at length he sunk upon a log, quite exhausted with his violent exercise, and the terrible excitement which accompanied it.

How long he had sat thus Archibald never knew, but it was some time—time of which the young man was not more than half conscious. He was aroused to consciousness by feeling a light hand placed upon his shoulder. Startled by the shock, he looked up, and beheld Christian standing silently beside him.

Various emotions blended in the suffering man's mind at the discovery. The first which he could realize was joy at the meeting, and under its influence he threw himself into the red youth's arms. Then, in a moment, he loosened his hold, and seating himself again upon the log, wept till hot tears chased each other down his cheeks like the rain-drops

which fell from the trees overhead. Christian stood looking on, perplexed at what he saw. Never had his friend acted so before.

"What is wrong? What the matter?" he asked, instinctively stepping back a pace or two.

Archibald made a great effort, and succeeded in calming himself. Then realizing how strange his behavior must appear, he drew Christian to a seat beside him, and with as few words as possible, related all that had happened to him since leaving Hadley.

The listener was scarcely less agitated than the speaker before the recital was ended, though his Indian stoicism enabled him to subdue outward expression more fully.

"That must not be!" he finally said, after Archibald had concluded his recital.

"I, at least, can not bear to think of it," was the reply. "But we are almost powerless, alone as we are; what can we do, Christian?"

"Me don' know," returned Christian. "Me go yonder and find out," pointing to the village. "Come by-an'-by, and let you know. You stay here?" he asked, as he prepared to move away.

"I hope you will come soon and tell me of some plan for saving her life."

"Me come!" and with that he was gone.

It seemed as if the long hours never would wear away, and the faint hope he had had that Christian would accomplish something, faded again to a deep despondency. What could the single-handed Indian do, in opposition to a tribe?

At length a light form sprang over the fortifications, and dashed away in a circuit, bringing up near where the impatient watcher was crouching. It was Christian, and though in haste he brought tidings of hope. If Archibald would consent to take the maiden to his home and people, for a time, Christian would guarantee that he would get her outside the village under cover of darkness. Of course the suffering lover had but one word to say in the matter, and that was to bid his red ally God speed. With a few quickly whispered directions, the faithful fellow hastened back, that his absence might not excite comment among his red brothers.

Night came, but oh, how slowly! It seemed to the impatient man that he never had seen a day so long. But the light finally faded away, and as it did so he crept up to a station in the vicinity of the village which had been indicated by Christian as the proper point for him to occupy in the scheme contemplated. Still the rain descended, though with less fury, and there was every indication that it would cease long before morning. Once or twice he felt that it had ceased while he remained there watching, but soon it would rain again, as though the storm-king was putting forth his last efforts.

At length he heard a scrambling noise near by, a low whisper, and the next moment a figure brushed against him. Of course all was inky blackness, but something more than ordinary senses seemed to tell him that the expected ones had come.

Pressing the Indian maiden to his heart for a moment, he grasped the hand of faithful Christian, and the trio stole away into the forest blackness.

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN IN THE FIELD.

WHEN the young Mohegan left the side of his suffering white friend, he had an idea in his mind, looking to the release of the maiden. Knowing the peculiarities of his people fully, he had a great advantage over any one whose very presence would have been the signal of distrust. Yet the idea which he had hastily conceived was not breathed to Archibald, lest he should thus raise hopes which he might not be able to realize. His course, on the contrary, was an embodiment of shrewdness.

Slowly sauntering toward the village, he assumed an air of listless indifference and fatigue, which could not have been better counterfeited. Shrinking from the wet deluge, which was far from comfortable, he crept along toward the cabin

which served as his home when among his red brethren. Although there were abundant evidences that something unusual had happened, he did not ask any questions, nor did he appear to notice the fact.

But once inside the wigwam, he could no longer remain in silence even if he would. The inmates no sooner learned of his ignorance in the matter than he was fully acquainted with every fact, even to the rash denunciations of his white friend.

Until the end of the recital was reached Christian was all attention, never uttering a syllable, but giving all heed to the points of the story. Then his first exclamation was one of surprise that no vengeance had been visited upon the *squaw* who had dared to raise her hand against a *warrior*. It made no matter as to the provocation. What right had the maiden to thus forget her position? Clearly, none at all. She deserved to die upon those very grounds; and his brother warriors must be very *squaw*-like to allow a little rain to hinder their purpose.

Thus artfully appealing to their passions, and making sure that it was done in a manner to excite no suspicion against himself, the young brave soon paved the way for the proposition which he had in view.

All the Indians seemed anxious for a quiet night's rest as the evening approached, and none were found really desiring to stand guard over the doomed maiden. After repeatedly assuring his brethren that she should have been sent to the realms of the Great Spirit during the day, Christian offered to stand guard one-half the time, provided another should share his vigils. Of course the offer was joyfully accepted. Another brave was detailed to assist Christian, and there the matter rested.

Certain now of what he had only hoped for before, the plotter contrived to visit his friend in the forest, and break the good news to him. Then returning, he bent all his energies to the perfection of his plan.

When darkness settled over the earth the two guards took their position. Christian knew with whom he had to deal, and there was a calm feeling of self-reliance at his heart. As but one of them would be required to stand at a time, the schemer induced his companion to keep watch while he

obtained a few moments' sleep. But before composing himself to rest, the red youth produced a bottle of rum, which he had procured.

Taking a hearty drink himself, he handed it to the other, who imbibed a generous quantity. Placing the bottle in a corner, Christian cast about him for a comfortable resting-place. Finally he selected the angle furthest from the "fire-water," and doubled up beneath his blanket. He had not misjudged.

His companion was an inordinate lover of strong drink, and no sooner did he fancy that Christian's eyes were sealed in slumber than he paid a visit to the half-emptied bottle. Again and again were they repeated, till from the hole in his blanket, through which the schemer peeped forth, he saw that the intoxicated Indian was fast yielding to the drunken drowsiness which oppressed him. This was precisely what he had been hoping for, and rising up with considerable confusion, Christian indicated his willingness to take his companion's place. It is unnecessary to say that the offer was at once accepted.

Within five minutes the drunken Indian was so dead asleep that no ordinary commotion would have aroused him. Making sure of the fact, Christian approached the maiden, and bent beside her couch. As he had supposed, she was not sleeping. A few words conveyed to her the fact of his friendship, and what she was to do to avoid her dreadful fate.

When certain that she had comprehended him, the plotter moved away. The maiden rolled from her couch at the same time, and slipped forth into the darkness.

A moment later and the cabin was desolate, so far as moving forms were concerned. Christian had secured the gun of his sleeping fellow-guardsman, and vanished like some intangible spirit.

But at a little distance outside the cabin, two living beings were stealing away. Christian was leading Shining Star by the hand, and both were making the best of their way toward the spot where Archibald was supposed to be in waiting.

But with all his shrewdness, Christian was not to escape

unnoticed. The door of Wawanooma's hut was opened for a moment, and the strong rays of a torch shone across their path. In a moment they had passed beyond reach of its glare, and, trusting that no eye had discovered their presence, they hastened onward. The Indian leader himself had been the only one to discern them, and even he was far from satisfied whether he had really seen living beings or not.

Filled, as he was, with jealous regard for the safe-keeping of all trusts reposed in himself, the idea at once crossed his mind that all might not be right with the doomed maid. Slipping from his own hut, he visited that where he had seen her carefully placed under guard. The scene which presented itself was sufficient to fill him with alarm. The prisoner was not there. An unmistakable odor of "fire-water" pervaded the room. All efforts to awaken the drowsy guard proved futile.

The commotion quickly brought others, and as an escape was the only possible construction to be put upon the state of affairs, a party was quickly raised and dispatched in pursuit.

Christian and Archibald met, as we have seen. No sooner were they under way than the former slipped into his companion's hand the extra gun he had brought, and a limited supply of ammunition. Archibald breathed his thanks, and then they pushed onward without any pause.

Although both and all were well acquainted with the region through which they were passing, their progress was very slow. The first misstep might betray them, and any deviation from the proper course would be certain to involve them in confusion and peril. With no guide in that blackness save instinct and long practice, it was rather a wonder that they did not stray. But steadily onward was their progress, and gradually, though slowly, the distance between them and the Indian town was widening.

They had been feeling their way along in this manner for some time, and their hearts were really swelling with hope. Suddenly Christian paused with a light expression of alarm, and bent his ear to the earth. Filled with a sudden dread the others waited for his movements.

After listening, or endeavoring to do so, for some few

moments, he raised his head with an exclamation of dissatisfaction.

"Too much rain!" he whispered. "Me hear nothin'?"

"What is it?" asked Archibald.

"Don't know. Guess Mohegan after us!"

"Do you think so?"

"Thought me hear step. Don't know. Not stop to hear any more now."

Christian led the way onward, but his companions were all disappointment. The thought that they were pursued seemed synonymous with recapture, and all the dreadful evils which that event would bring. Of course it would be wildness to hope for a second escape.

The patterning rain was sufficient in itself to drown all other sounds of trifling character. But notwithstanding the fact, evidences soon multiplied of the presence of pursuers. The crackling of twigs, the plunges of incautious footfalls, and now and then the muttered words in Indian dialect which reached the ears of the fugitives, showed unmistakably that they were not to escape so easily.

What were they to do? The pursuers were evidently upon their direct trail, and if not already aware of their presence, they must soon make the discovery. There was no time to halt and consult. No time, even, to compare views.

While Archibald was considering what was possible to be done, and wildly casting about for some possible means of eluding the pursuing party, he felt himself taken by the hand, and led from the direct route they were pursuing.

Yielding to the guidance of Christian, which he knew was not without some definite object, the young man grasped the maiden's hand in turn, and they moved very slowly and carefully, some distance in the new direction.

On pausing, the party were in a thick grove of young spruces. None of the trees seemed above twenty feet in height, and were thickly studded with branches to the very earth.

"Climb!" the young Indian whispered to each of his companions.

A very few moments sufficed to place them in the midst of

the rain-soaked branches. But not too soon was the movement. Scarcely had it been completed when the sounds, now more distinct than ever, announced that the pursuing party was all about their place of refuge. One or two even passed directly beneath them, growling away in their own tongue at the want of success attending their efforts.

Indeed they seemed in no haste to leave the vicinity. The position of the trio in the branches was becoming painful, yet still the sound of Indian voices could be heard in the neighboring part of the grove.

At length they ceased, and then it seemed to Archibald that the footsteps were retreating in the direction whence they came. Before he was really aware of the fact, there was a movement beneath, and the low whisper which he had so often heard from his Indian ally, again reached his ears.

"They go back. Say squaw and me not come this way. Can't find trail, so wait till morrow. Me go down hear them talk it all."

The twain slid from their perches in the trees, and sought out the trail which they had been pursuing, glad enough to exercise their limbs once more in the effort to reach safety.

It was evident that the rain was ceasing. Though the wind howled around the tree-tops, and the great drops still descended to the earth, it seemed that they fell only from the tree-tops, while a fine mist, which could be but the drizzling away of the storm, filled the open air.

Filled with fresh hopes, and disregarding their wet and uncomfortable condition, the party pushed forward as fast as possible.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STRANGER—AND STRANGER STILL.

WHEN morning finally came, and brought upon its wings sunshine and gladness once more, they had put many a good mile between themselves and the Indian town. Archibald was suffering some from pain in his head, but he bathed it in

cold water from a bubbling spring, and Christian applied a poultice of chewed leaves and roots which at once allayed most of the unpleasant feeling. After a brief respite they set forward again, hope once more lending its rosy hue to all their hearts.

All day they pressed on without any adventure, and when night fell they were within a few miles of Hadley. Here a consultation was held, and though all parties were quite tired, it was decided best to maintain their efforts till the town be reached, as there was no determining what might take place before morning.

A good moon gave them a plenty of light, so that their progress was not really difficult, more especially since both of the men were well acquainted with every foot of the ground.

They had accomplished more than half of the remaining distance, when Christian, who was a little in advance, stopped and touched the arm of his companion.

"See," he remarked, pointing through a vista in the wood, to a point some distance in advance. "Pale face."

There was, indeed, a dark figure sitting in the moonlight, but whether it was a human being or animal, Archibald could not, at first sight, have determined. Closer investigation, however, convinced him that Christian was right in regard to its character.

"What can he be doing there?" was the natural inquiry, which he breathed in a whisper to his companion.

"Don' know. S'pose we go see? Guess nothin' good."

"So do I guess; and I think we had better steal that way, and see what manner of person he may be. Quite likely it is a scout, though, and one who can give us some news as to what we may look for."

The trio moved noiselessly in the direction of the reclining figure, and so silent was their progress that the unconscious sitter knew nothing of his neighbors till a hand was placed upon his shoulder.

He sprung to his feet.

Both parties were about equally astonished.

The strange figure was none other than he who had twice before appeared and vanished like the supernatural being he

was generally deemed to be! Archibald grasped him firmly by the arm.

"So, young man, and you, sir Indian, our destinies cross again, it seems," he remarked, after a time, smiling in his peculiar manner. "I was somewhat beside myself, or I should not have been caught thus."

These last words were spoken absently, and had the strange man been in a guarded mood he evidently would not have spoken as he did.

"Then you admit that you are trying to hide away from the sight of your fellow-men," remarked Archibald. "I have long wondered who and what you were, and now the moment has come for you to clear away the mystery. Will you not tell us who you are? Though, first of all, I would devoutly thank you for saving our little town of Hadley from the Indians. Believe me, all the inhabitants are more than grateful for your service."

"Never mind that, sir; I had an interest in the matter they little dreamed of. But, whom have we here?"

He bent close to Shining Star as he spoke, giving an exclamation of dissatisfaction as he added:

"Oh, I see; an Indian beauty; but the likeness is very similar, *very*."

"What is it?" ventured Archibald.

"Nothing, now. You were asking me who I am, and I am half a mind to tell you, and trust all to your apparent friendship. I am quite tired of living shut up from my fellows."

"I am all interest," returned the young man, "and I assure you your confidence shall not be violated."

"Not now. I am not quite ready. You are going to Hadley; so am I. When we reach the place it will be time for me to decide. But you will not betray me?"

Archibald hesitated but a moment, and then he replied:

"I will not."

"Swear it."

"I swear."

"Enough; I can trust you. Let us go on. I will think as we walk."

He cast another searching glance at the Indian maiden,

and then they set forth. Archibald kept an eye upon his every movement, for he feared the unknown would seek to elude him, as once before he had done. But, that personage showed no disposition to evade him now, and the young man really began to feel confidence that some great secret was about to be transmitted to his keeping.

The party did not walk so fast now, and it was well on to midnight when they reached Hadley. Scouts were out, and they were stopped to give a satisfactory account of themselves, which they succeeded in doing at all times. But upon those occasions the stranger slunk mysteriously away, rejoining his friends again after the scouts had been left behind.

At length they were fairly within the town, and then the stranger whispered to Archibald,

"Come with me, you and your companion, to the house of Cornelius Williams, for in one sense I am his guest. We will come to the back door, that no one may be disturbed."

He led the way with an ease and freedom that showed how well he was acquainted with the route. Carefully opening the door, he closed it again after the party had entered, and then placed chairs for their accommodation.

By this time the master of the house had been aroused, and made his appearance with candle in one hand and musket in the other. He was assured by a word from the stranger. Williams passed the candle he held into the other's hand, and disappeared. The stranger came forward with a step scarcely steady, and putting the candle close to Shining Star's face, he surveyed her with a keen and piercing gaze.

"You are not an Indian girl," he said, rather than asked, at length.

"Yes, me Mohegan squaw," was the almost sad reply.

A shade of disappointment crossed the face of her questioner, and stepping back a pace he set the candle upon the small table. As he did so, Williams and his spouse entered the room. When they had taken seats, the stranger bent forward and said,

"My friends, these persons have been anxious to know the history of my former life, and what I really am. For some reasons I have felt it best to gratify them, and to that end I encouraged them to swear secrecy. They will not betray me

I have brought them here that I might communicate what I wished without fear of any person discovering us. Besides, I have something else in view, for I feel almost assured that I have made a discovery. Had not years tempered my enthusiasm, I should divulge it at once, and seek proof. As it is, and as I am, let it rest for the present."

He paused for a time, as if collecting and preparing what he would say. Then turning toward Archibald, he began the anxiously expected story:

"I will commence by saying that my name is Eugene Burke. I came of a good English family, and in my youth enjoyed rare privileges, which I did not fail to improve, in a great measure. When the movement against Charles the First took place, I was very forward in it, for I hated the man. Besides, I had a boundless ambition—ambition which proved my ruin, despite the many examples I had seen, and all the good advice I had heard. Finally, he was arraigned for trial, and I, with others, sat as judges, pre-determined to pass sentence of death upon him. You know the result. The head-man's ax let out his life, and then I exulted that our success had been so great.

"Cromwell was not insensible to the part I had taken, and in the bloody wars which followed I was made one of his generals. I was successful, too, and that added to my growing laurels. There it was that I gained the military knowledge which enabled me to turn the tide of battle against the Indians the other day.

"But the English people had no ambition to gratify, and they began to long for quiet and the restoration of their rightful king. He came, at length, and was received with open arms. Our cause died in an hour, and after a little reflection most of us would have abandoned it. But we were now to gather the ripened fruit of our folly.

"Among other acts of the new king and his advisers, was a decree of death to thirty of the judges who had condemned his father. My ambition had placed me in the foremost list, and now I was to gain the reward of my endeavors. I fell down the wind, and was to reap the whirlwind. But, though we had lost our power, many were the secret friends throughout the realm upon whom we could place reliance, and they

were certain to help us in every possible way. Thus it was that we heard of the decree, and took time by the forelock in secreting ourselves.

"My wife was dead, and only a little child was left me. Taking this with me, in company with a friend or two, I set sail for the new world. We were fortunate in eluding those who sought us, and landed safely in Connecticut. For some time we resided in and about New Haven, but our retreat was finally discovered, and deeming it prudent to leave no trace by which we might be sought out, we came hither.

"Still we had good friends, and though none of them could shelter us, they told our story to this good man, under whose roof we have dwelt for twelve years. Perhaps we should have lived and died unknown, had it not been for the Indian attack upon this town. Looking forth, I saw that the day was all too surely lost, unless some friend came to your assistance. I saw the thing that was needed, and the points required to be held. Finally my old love of military affairs overcame all other considerations, especially when I realized that the lives of myself and companion would very likely be sacrificed should the Indians become masters of the town. You know the result.

"There I saw you, young sir, and realized that you were born for a master-spirit. Instantly my heart went forth toward you, and I could have sworn eternal friendship for you at that time. But, I hid myself in the midst of the victory, and had half forgotten you, when I fell into the hands of a party of Narragansetts. It was my custom to go forth at times and communicate with friends outside the village, and in such an hour I fell into the hands of the savages. Yourself and this brave Mohegan came to my rescue, and again did my heart go out to you. But, I checked the feeling, and stole away from you, to preserve my secret. Still I tired of this seclusion, and, though I dare not now proclaim myself publicly, yet I would like your sympathy and friendship."

"You shall have them, sir!" said the youth, who had been much affected by the relation.

"Remember, you are sworn to keep my secret."

"I am; and here is my hand that it shall be kept inviolate."

They grasped hands, and then Burke turned to Christian.

"You will not betray me?" he said, gazing upon the regular features of the Mohegan.

"I will answer for him, too," said Archibald.

"Me no understand who you be?" the Indian responded, with a shake of the head.

"Me do," said Shining Star, rising and approaching him. "Me think you good, kind man!"

She placed her hand in his, and the strange man drew her toward him, with renewed interest.

Suddenly a thought seemed to strike him, and darting to the table he raised the candle. Then, turning the maiden partially from him, he raised the heavy tresses of hair which fell about her left ear.

For a moment he gazed, and then, with trembling hands and uplifted eyes, he joyfully, reverentially exclaimed,

"Yes—thank the God whose laws I have not always regarded—I have found her at last, my own dear lost child!"

"What do you mean?" asked Cornelius Williams, rising and gazing upon the man almost in doubt.

"Sit down, and I will tell you," he said, resuming a seat. "I have been schooling myself to calmness for a long time, and I fancy my training has not all been in vain.

"When I was near New Haven, it became next to impossible to keep my child with me. Accordingly, I placed her with a kindly-disposed woman in the neighborhood, who lived quite by herself. For some time all prospered well, till the Indians made an attack in the vicinity, murdered the old woman, and burned her house.

"Of course I supposed my child dead, and mourned her as such; but to-night I have found her once more. Yonder she sits!"

He pointed to Shining Star, who sat vainly endeavoring to comprehend the full import of all that she heard.

"How can you be sure of that?" Mr. Williams asked. "Though very fair, she certainly looks like an Indian to me."

"I will tell you. I know her, and felt that I knew her when first my eyes rested upon her, by the great resemblance

she bears her mother. But that was not certain proof. When she was with the old woman I spoke of, she fell, and hurt her head, so that, for a time, we despaired of her recovery. A portion of her ear was taken off by contact with a sharp instrument, and a severe wound inflicted upon the scalp, which could never have healed without a scar. Here you see them."

He raised the tresses of hair, displaying a scar, corresponding exactly to what he had described.

The maiden stood in speechless wonder, uncertain whether she was really conscious or only dreaming.

"Me know she white squaw, all the time!" said Christian, at length.

"Ha! how did you know that?" the others asked, almost in a breath.

"Me see her little pappoose, white, like other pale-faces. Know she stole sometime. Grow like Mohegan, as she grow bigger."

The maiden had been bowing her head in thought, and finally said,

"Me remember that!" indicating the scar upon her head. "And me once had a *papa*—that me remember well."

"And do you not remember the old woman you used to live with?" the new-found father asked.

"No. But me remember a great fire, and go with Injun great ways in the woods, and never see *papa* again. That all."

"That is enough. You are the little Arabella I lost, many years ago. Will you own me for a father?"

Her only reply was to place her arms about his neck, calling him a dear "papa," and kissing him. Here we drop the curtain.

The party did not think of fatigue or danger till near day-break, and then they separated. Shining Star no longer, but Arabella Burke, was to retain her Indian name and character among the villagers till her marriage with Archibald; an event which had been decided upon during the happy session which followed the reunion.

That event did not, however, at once take place. Arabella would not consent to become the bride of him who had chosen

her till she could speak the English language quite properly, as well as read and write to an extent which gave promise of future proficiency. In other respects she desired to be fitted for her new station, and Archibald was necessitated to wait till another year rolled around its summer of gladness and prosperity to the colonies.

Then in the presence of such friends as knew the whole story, the ceremony was performed by Mr. Williams, who was a minister of the Gospel, and the more reconciled father saw his restored child made the happy bride of the man who had saved her from a life of savage degradation.

What the Mohegans resolved upon, in council, after finding that the one they were so decided upon sacrificing had left them, does not appear. If her retreat was known, they made no demand upon the whites for her restoration.

Fearful of some treachery, however, Archibald soon removed with her to other settlements, where they were quite beyond the reach of the Mohegans. Here they passed happy and prosperous lives, beloved by all who knew them. Christian never returned to his people again, but followed the fortunes of his friend and sometime ally for many years. What finally became of him is not recorded.

Eugene Burke died as he lived for many years—unknown. The latter part of his career is so wrapped in mystery that it may never be revealed.

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